



Prof. Bogdan Filow (1883-1945)

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Research on Duvanli, Mezek and Antique
European Culture

THRACIAN TREASURES FROM BULGARIA

by Evgeni Paunov

(In memoriam, Professor Ivan Venedikov, Jan.16,1916 - Aug.19,1997, distinguished researcher of the Thracian culture.)



Fig.1: Golden animal effigies from Varna, Neolithic, ca. 3000 BC (Varna Archaeological Museum Photo: Kr. Georgiev).

Beginning in February, 1998 the major exhibit "Ancient Gold: The Wealth of the Thracians" is being shown in eight North American museums through the end of 1999 (museums are listed at the end of the article). First hosted in Japan in 1994-1995, this spectacular collection of ancient grave goods from Bulgaria assembles for the first time more than 250 archaeological objects of great artistic importance, dating from the fourth millennium BC to the third century AD. Finds from fifteen ancient mound-tombs are on loan from a dozen regional and central museums in Bulgaria. Most of these materials have been only recently excavated from Thracian mounds.

In the last few decades a number of significant collections of Thracian treasures have been discovered in present-day Bulgaria, providing much of our present knowledge of ancient Thrace. The high artistic mastery, stylistic features, and skilled workmanship of these decorative Thracian objects clearly testify to rich local traditions in the applied arts. They also comprise a major source of information on Thracian history, culture and art which until now has been little exposed in American museums.

Herodotus (480-425 BC), called by Cicero "the father of history," has described Thrace in his *Histories* (ca.445-440 BC; see adjacent box) as a politically heterogeneous region whose inhabitants were "the



Fig.3: Map showing locations of present-day Bulgaria (red), Thrace (light blue), Greece (dark blue), and various sites mentioned in text.

diers suffered great hardships, but were also at times lavishly entertained (see box). Additional historical sources on Thrace include Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War*, Arrian's *March of Alexander*, the

Herodotus on Thracians and their ritual:

"They have many names, each tribe according to its region. All these Thracians are alike in their usages, save the Getae, and the Trausi, and those that dwell above the Crestonaeans.

"...They worship no gods but Ares, Dionysus, and Artemis. But their princes, unlike the rest of their country men, worship Hermes above all gods and swear only by him, claiming him for their ancestor.

"...Among those of them that are rich, the funeral rites are these: They lay out the dead for three days, then after killing all kinds of victims and first making lamentation they feast; after that they make away with the body either by fire or else by burial in the earth, and when they have built a mound they set on foot all kinds of contests, wherein the greatest prizes are offered for the hardest fashion of single combat." (*History* V, 3-8)

Xenophon describes a Thracian feast, ca.400 BC:

"After sacrificing some of the oxen they have captured and other animals too, they provided a feast which was quite a good one, though they ate reclining on low couches and drunk out of horn cups which they had come across the country. When they had poured the libations and sung the Paean, first of all two Thracians stood up and performed a dance to the flute, wearing full armour. They leapt high into the air with great agility and brandished their swords. In the end one of them, as everybody thought, struck the other one, who fell to the ground, acting all the time.... Then some more Thracians carried the stripped man out, as though he was dead, though actually he had not been hurt in the slightest." (Xenophon, *Anabasis*, VI, 1,4-6)

"It was then (in winter) easy to see why the Thracians wear fox skins round their heads and ears, and why they have tunics that cover their legs and not only the upper part of the body, and why, when they are on horseback, they wear long cloaks reaching down to their feet instead of our short coats." (VII, 4, 4)



Fig.2: Gold vessels from the Vâlchitrân Treasure, 13th-12th centuries BC (National Archaeological Museum, Sofia. Photo by Kr. Georgiev).

biggest and most numerous people in the world, next to the Indians; were they under one ruler, or united, they would in my judgement be invincible and the strongest nation on earth; but since there is no way or contrivance to bring this about, they are for this reason weak...."

Other comments on Thracian culture during the period of these exhibition materials are provided by the Greek general and military historian Xenophon. During his march upcountry (*Anabasis*) within Persia and Thrace during wars of 401-399 BC, he and other Greek sol-



Fig.4: Map of Thrace and adjacent provinces in the Graeco-Roman world.

Thrace during Greek and Roman times.

Bulgaria is made up of parts of the three ancient provinces of Moesia, Thrace, and Macedonia (fig.4), the latter the homeland of Philip II and Alexander the Great. Geographically, Thrace has varied in extent throughout history. To the Greeks it stretched from the Danube to the Aegean, bounded on the east by the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara, and on the west by the mountains east of the Vardar (Greek Axios) River. The subsequent Roman province of Thrace was bounded by the Haemus (modern Balkan Mountains) on the north, and the Nestos (Nestos) river on the south and west.

Thracian tribes inhabited the mountain land on either side of the Margus (Morava) and the flat country between the Haemus and the Danube, lands east of the Illyrians from the Aegean to the mouth of the Danube. The Thracians spoke the same language as the Moesians, and probably also the Getae and Daci. They were skilled horsemen and good infantry from the time of the Peloponnesian Wars (429-404 BC) through the reigns of the Caesars.

Mommsen in his *Provinces of the Roman Empire* described Thrace as a non-Greek land. Thrace became subject to Persia ca. 516-510 BC. Hellenistic influence was spread when Philip II of Macedon subjected Thrace (356-342 BC) and founded Cabyle (near Jambol on the Tundja River) and Philippopolis. Philip's son Alexander made the Danube the northern boundary of Macedonia and many Thracians fought under him in Asia. After the death of Alexander, neither the Seleucids nor the Ptolemies were able to hold Thrace.

Celts then moved into the Moeso-Thracian territory and established the Empire of Tylis in SE Thrace near Byzantium. After subduing the Greek influence in Thrace, this empire fell to the natives during the Hannibalic wars in 216 BC. After capturing Thrace from Philip V in the Second Macedonian War, the Romans assigned Thrace to the Kingdom of Pergamum in 197. Portions of Thrace were ruled as a client kingdom of Rome in the second half of Augustus' reign, under Rhoemetaces, the last Thracian king. In AD 19, Titus Trebellenus Rufus was sent to Thrace as governor by Tiberius. Two years later native Thracians rose against the Romans and gained the support of some Moesian tribes; this was suppressed by the Moesian legions.

A second uprising began in AD 25 when Thracians refused to serve in the Roman army beyond their own borders. In AD 46, Thrace was incorporated by Claudius as a full Roman province with first an equestrian and then under Trajan a Senatorial governor. A road system was open by AD 61. After gaining provincial status, Thrace was stable, never requiring a legion, and was garrisoned by under 2000 troops.

Geographies of Strabo and Pliny the Elder, Athenaeus' *Connoisseurs in Dining*, and many other Greek and Roman works.

Thracian mineral resources and fertile soils combined to make this area prosperous during the Neolithic and Chalcolithic phases of Balkan prehistory, much of whose chronology derives from a tell in South Bulgaria in the village of Karanovo. Intensive cultural and trade contacts with Anatolia and East Mediterranean basin are clearly displayed in the sophisticated forms and ornaments of Balkan Neolithic pottery. By the Late Chalcolithic era (late 4th millennium BC), gold and silver played an increasingly important role. A rich cemetery found in a level ground setting near Varna on the Black Sea coast has yielded a great variety of fine gold objects and adornments weighing over 6 kg from the Chalcolithic (fig.1).

During the subsequent Bronze Age, along with evidence of the rapid development of pottery, impressive examples of gold deposits continue to appear in burials. The Vâlchitrân Treasure, found in Central North Bulgaria in 1925, and dating from the end of the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1300-1000 BC), is remarkable for its precise craftsmanship (fig.2). This cache, consisting of 13 gold articles weighing a total of 12.5 kg, had a somewhat heterogenous assortment of seven lids and six other vessels, including a large kyathos, a triple receptacle and four cups. These vessels are distinguished by the simplicity of their shapes and the subtlety of their design, with some showing close parallels with items from Mycenae, and providing clear evidence for the extensive cultural contacts of Thrace with the Mycenaean world.

Apart from Bronze Age deposits at Vâlchitrân and Kazichene near Sofia, the bulk of Thracian treasures in the exhibit were manufactured between the 5th and 3rd century BC, the period of greatest economic, political and cultural expansion of Thrace. Representing the heyday of its kings and its rich tribal chiefdoms, the same 5th-3rd century BC period saw the political apex of the



Fig.5: Thracian tomb-heroon under Ostrousha mound near Shipka, ca. 350-330 BC (Courtesy of Dr. G. Kitov, photo by E. Paunov).

Thracian Odrysian kingdom in the Balkan Peninsula reached by Kotys I (386-359 BC), rival of king Philip II of Macedon in the first years of his reign. Following a series of wars of annexation and alliances, the Odrysian kings reunited the greater part of Thrace after the Median wars and, between 475 and 350 BC, played an important role in the history of Southeastern Europe, by striving to create a unified and strong European state similar to the Persian empire. Thracian economic, political and cultural ties with the Eastern Mediterranean, Near East, Balkans, and Black Sea hinterland states distinguished it as a powerful center of the ancient world in the immediate vicinity of the high cultures of Greek cities



Fig.6: Gold rhyton with ram protome from Panagjurishte Treasure, ca 325-300 BC (Archaeological Museum Plovdiv, inv. no. 3196, wt. 439.05 g., Photo by Kr. Georgiev).

and colonies, Macedonia, and Persia.

Although many Classical authors mentioned the Thracians, they remained relatively obscure to the modern world until the period of First World War. Previously, most Thracian art objects were assigned to the Scythian culture, a classification which enjoyed great popularity at that time. Current views began to emerge by 1917, when Dr. Bogdan D. Filow, the first director of Bulgarian Institute of Archaeology, wrote a study where he argued persuasively for the indigenous character and style of ancient Thracian art. Subsequently, large quantities of important Thracian art objects have been recovered in Bulgaria. Today Filow's original viewpoint on the native origins of Thracian art is widely accepted by most classical and primitive art historians. Many other Thracian monuments have also become known from southern Romania, northern Greece and Turkey.

The tombs as a source of history: The abundant archaeological material excavated in those earthen embankments of Bulgaria has greatly enriched our knowledge of Thracian life, traditions, and history. About 15,000 such massive ground barrows are still visible today in the hills and flatlands of the Balkan Range, anciently called Haemus (fig.4). Finds in the current exhibit have been selected from more than 350 Bulgarian tombs that have been systematically excavated, spanning the period between the end of 3rd millennium to the 4th century AD.

Several of the richest burials date from 6th-3rd centuries BC, the apogee of the Thracian state of Odrissae. These finds (including Varbitsa, Rahmanli, Brezovo, Dalboki, Ezerovo, Duvanlij, Mezek, Mogilanska mogila in Vratsa, Sveshtari, Kazanluk, and Shipka) show convincingly that several centers of political activity existed in Thracian lands during that time.

Tombs of kings (heroons): Thracian rulers and members of the nobility were buried in monumental stone tombs, which also served as places for ritual ceremonies to honor the deceased ruler, with offerings of rich funeral gifts. In this sense, the tombs constituted underground temples of heroes—and thus have become known as heroons. Approximately fifty such tombs have been uncovered in Thracian mounds in Bulgaria up to the present

time, with ten structures found between 1992 and 1996.



Fig.7: Silver rhyton with doe's head from Rozovets, ca. 425-375 BC (National Archaeological Museum Sofia, no. B-59. Photo by Kr. Georgiev).

Forms of the tombs: Tombs dating from 5th-3rd centuries BC, while showing a great diversity in layout and structure, share some common elements. They were made of regularly cut stone blocks, or occasionally of fired bricks, and were sometimes adorned with a painted decoration. The two main categories of chambers include the rectangular plan, and the circular form topped by a dome (tholos). The entrances to many Thracian tombs have sophisticated façades comparable to Macedonian, Persian and Lycian examples, and also contain covered passages (dromos) with painted walls and ceilings in some ways resembling Etrurian tombs.

Ancient metal work in 4th century BC Thracian tombs: In essence, the history of Thracian art is integrally linked with the history of toreutics, as ancient Greeks called the techniques of metal-casting and engraving. Thrace was well known for its

silver and gold mines, including the Pangeion gold mines near the Strymon delta, captured by Philip II in 348 BC.

The Panagjurishte Treasure, made of pure gold, consists of 9 vessels weighing a total of 6.100 kilograms. Found in South Bulgaria in 1949 (fig.3), these vessels, including eight rhyta and one large phiale, were intended to be used as a feast set. Produced in the latter part of the 4th century BC, they came from a workshop at Propontis or at Western Asia Minor, possibly in Lampsacus. The phiale and amphora-rhyton in this treasure are marked with graffiti showing the weight of the vessels in two systems of measurement: one in units of Persian darics and another in units of Alexandrian (or Attic) staters.

The Greek artisans who made the collection depicted various mythological subjects on these gold pieces. On the amphora there is a scene from the 'Seven Against Thebes,' while one of the rhyta with a ram-shaped protome (fig.6) shows Aphrodite, Athena, and Hera before the judgment of Paris. Other vessels show Herakles fighting with Ceryneian Hind, and Theseus in combat with the bull of Marathon, while a third portrays a very rare scene, Dionysus with the nymph Eriope (not, as is more usual, with Ariadne).

In some cases, the names of the gods are inscribed in Greek beside their images. In this way, the artists have informed their rich Thracian clients on the identity of mythological personages, in a manner sim-



Fig.8: Silver-gilt rhyton ending in a protome of a horse from Borovo Treasure, ca.375-350 BC (Museum of History Russe, inv. no. II-357. Photo by Kr. Georgiev).

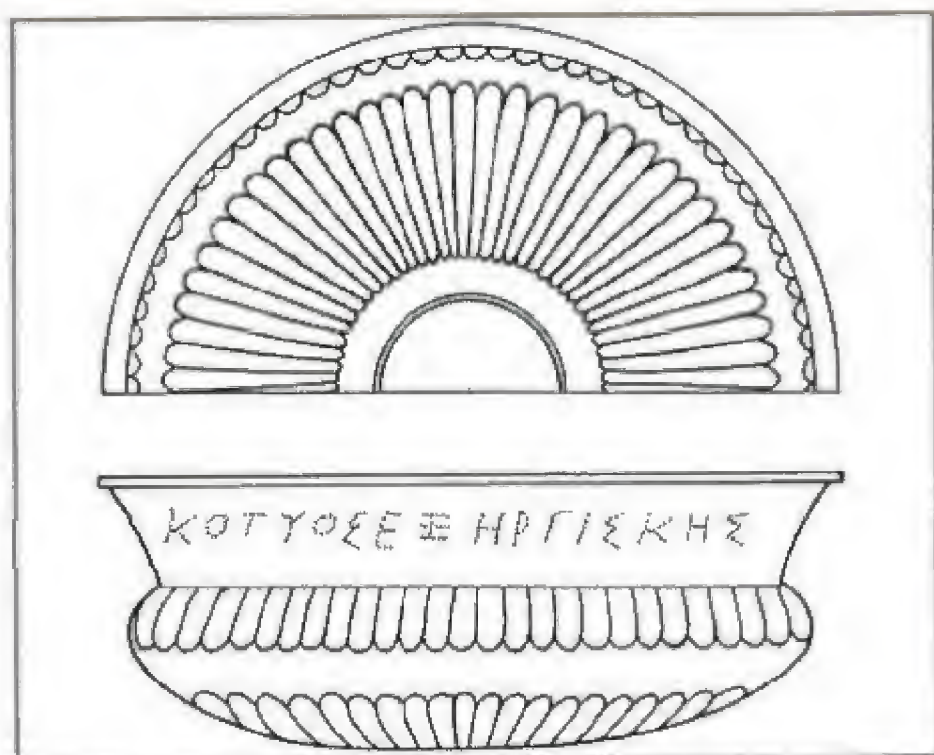


Fig.9: Silver phiale no. 42 from the Rogozen Treasure, inscribed in Greek: 'This vessel belongs to Kotys from the inhabitants of Argiskes' (*Museum of History, inv. B 570, wt. 170.6 gm, diam. 14.8 cm. Drawing by E. Tsenova, Courtesy of Museum of History, Vratsa*).

ilar to that used on Greek pottery.

Rhyton shapes frequently used in Thrace (as also in Late Bronze Age Crete, although later unpopular in Greece) often employ animal or human forms on the lower end (protome). Besides the horned ram's head from Panagjurishte already cited (fig.6), another from the Rozovets Treasure shows a doe's head (fig.7). Other rhytons depict a goat, the heads of stags, and Amazons, while one example from the Borovo Treasure represents a horse (fig.8).

Faces in these naturalistic images are depicted in the minutest detail, with even the irises of the eyes being marked. The goldsmiths preferred a clothed body as his subject. The images of the deities are not individualized, nor are they linked in a complete artistic composition.

Fourth century Thracian treasures in the exhibit: The Panagjurishte gold hoard in south-central Bulgaria (figs 6,15,20) is by far the richest and most brilliant hoard yet discovered. To give some idea of its relative value, it has been calculated that a

Thracian ruler in the late 4th century BC would have been able to pay wages to 500 mercenaries for a year with the quantity of gold in the deposit alone.

The Borovo Treasure, dating from ca.375-350 BC and found in 1974, consists of a magnificent set of five silver-gilt vessels intended for the drinking of wine.



Fig.11: Silver jug no. 157 from the Rogozen Treasure; the Great Goddess in a chariot with winged horses, ca. 350-320 BC (*Museum of History, Vratsa, inv. no. B 446, wt. 134.9 g, ht. 13 cm*).

Included are three rhyta with a protomes of a horse (Fig. 8), a bull, and a sphinx. Also found were a large two-handled cup, and a amphora-rhyton showing scenes from the mysteries of Dionysus. Four of the vessels are inscribed in Greek, allowing us to read that they were given to the Thracian king Kotys I from the inhabitants of the town of Beos in South-eastern Thrace.

Two other important treasures from the second half of the 4th century BC found accidentally in North Bulgaria are worthy of mention: the hoards from Lukovit and Letnitsa, both containing silver and silver-gilt pieces. The Lukovit collection consists of three small jugs, nine phialai, and three full sets of appliques and ornaments for horse harnesses, decorated with animal motifs and hunters on horseback.

The Letnitsa hoard, found in a large bronze receptacle, includes only horse trapping appliques (fig.19).

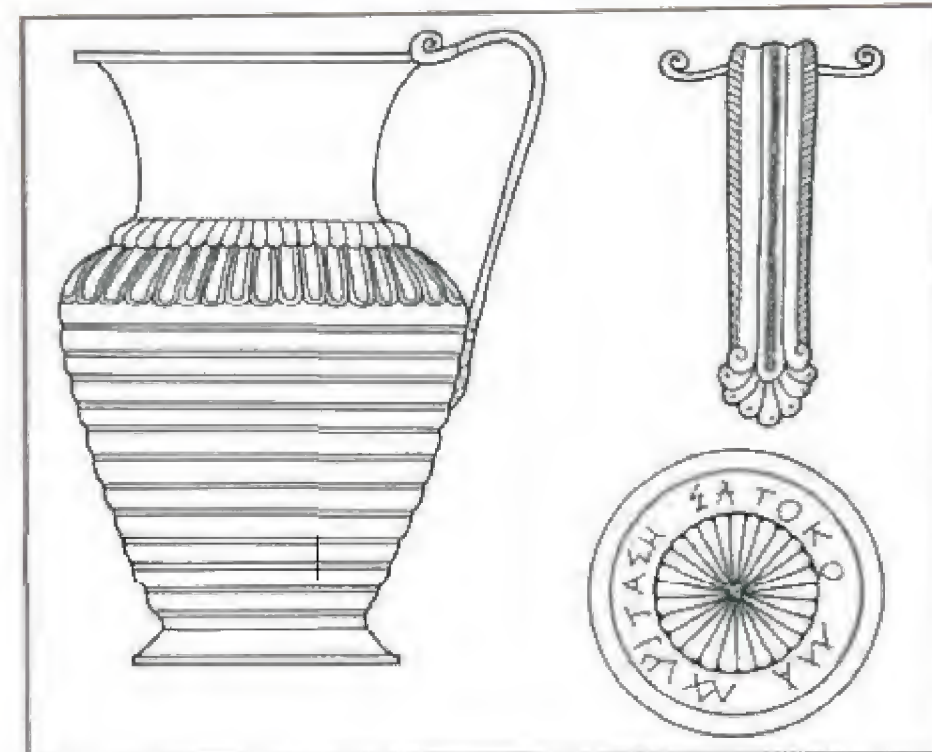


Fig.12: Silver jug no. 118 from the Rogozen Treasure, inscribed in Greek: 'I belong to Satokos' (*Museum of History Russe, inv. B 542, wt. 147.9 gm, ht. 11 cm. Drawing by E. Tsenova. Courtesy of Museum of History, Vratsa*).

Unique to this treasure, however, are fifteen square and rectangular plaques showing scenes from Thracian myths. As it happens, horse harness ornaments decorated with fabulous animal motifs are widespread among the Thracians in the 6th-2nd centuries BC. Always in pairs, they were placed symmetrically on either side of the headstall adorning the horse's head. At first sight their animal decoration looks Scythian, but more precise analysis and careful study of the style reveals that the primary influence stemmed from skilled Thracian craftsmen and workshops.

One of the most recent finds is the splendid Rogozen Treasure, accidentally discovered in the winter of 1985/86 in Northwestern Bulgaria. The 165 pieces of silver in this hoard (figs.9-13, 18) have an overall weight of nearly 20 kilograms. The great majority of objects were phialai and jugs, thirty-one of which are gilded. These were found in two groups, one consisting of 100 objects, the other of 65, placed five meters apart at only 0.4 meters depth.



Fig.10: Silver phiale no. 95 from Rogozen Treasure- 'six bucrania with acorns,' ca. 350-340 BC (*Museum of History, Vratsa, inv. no. B... wt. 170.3 g, diam. 17.6 cm*).



Fig.13: Silver gilt jug no. 160, from the Rogozen Treasure (*Museum of History, Vratsa, inv. B 570, wt. 134.4 gm, ht. 11 cm. Drawing by E. Tsenova. Courtesy Museum of History, Vratsa*).



Fig.14: Silver-gilt skyphos with female and rams heads from Strelcha, ca. 350-330 BC (National Archaeological Mus. Sofia. Photo Kr. Georgiev).

This immense hoard of vessels, the largest single collection of ancient treasure ever found in southeastern Europe, had been created and accumulated over nearly 150 years from the mid-5th century to the last quarter of the 4th century BC. It includes vessels attributed to specific workshops in Anatolia, Eastern Greece, Southern Thrace (Odryssi), and Northwestern Thrace (Triballi).

Most of the jugs are native Thracian, with the great majority taken from other Thracian burial mounds or tumuli. Some depict divine and cult scenes governed by a definite canon of iconography. There is, for example, a remarkable 'boar hunting' scene depicted on jug no. 159. Another central scene on no. 157 represents the



Fig.15: Gold amphora-rhyton from Panagjurishte Treasure, ca. 325-300 BC (Archaeological Museum Plovdiv, inv. no. 3203, wt. 1695.25 gm. Photo by Kr. Georgiev).

Great Thracian Goddess riding in a quadriga, or 4-horse chariot (fig.11). A third scene on jug no. 155 shows the same goddess riding on a lioness like an Amazon as part of a hunting motif (fig.18).

Many of the vessels from the Rogozen Treasure are inscribed in Greek with punched lettering. These inscriptions contain at least ten royal Thracian names (Satokos, Kersebleptes, Kotys, Didykaimos, and Disloias; figs.9,12) and several geographical sites in Southeastern Thrace (Beos, Apros, Geiston,



Fig.16: Gold finger-ring with two engraved figures in intaglio from Malka mogila mound near Shipka, ca. 350-325 BC (Museum of History Iskra, Kasanluk no. A II 1586, 14.83 g. Photo by VIFOR).

Argiskes, and Sauthabas; fig.9). Also notable is that the weight of some objects can easily be read in terms of Persian silver sigloi or Thraco-Macedonian drachmae.

Phialai, by definition, are flat, somewhat shallow bowls with small round centers, typical of the Hellenistic time period. The 108 phialai in the Rogozen hoard probably represent more than twice the number presently in museums collections elsewhere. Among the most interesting and unique pieces of this series is no. 4, a silver-gilt phiale imported from a Greek city on the western seaboard of Asia Minor, decorated with a central medallion showing Auge and Herakles. A typical northern Thracian phiale (fig.10) has a characteristic Greek motif around the omphalos, consisting of six embossed bull's heads (bucrania) depicted in vigorous realism, alternating with six acorns.

The Mogilanska mogila mound in Vratsa has provided another important group of magnificent Thracian art objects. In 1965-66, three stone tombs of noble Thracian chiefs were unearthed in the ground barrow in the heart of the city. The first, with a circular form, had been plundered in antiquity. The second tomb, the richer of the two, and fortunately intact, had



Fig.17: Bronze situla (4c BC) with head of Silenus from Malka mogila (Museum of History, Kazanlak).

a rectangular ground plan and two funerary chambers. In the outer chamber were found the remains of a biga, or a team of two horses. The straps of the horse's bridle were richly decorated with silver appliques. In the main chamber two skeletons were recovered - an adult and a young



Fig.18: Silver gilt jug no. 155 from the Rogozen Treasure, showing the Great Goddess riding on a lioness, ca. 350-320 BC. Wt. 210.4 g, ht. 13.5 cm (Museum of History, Vratsa, inv.B 448).



Fig.19: Silver gilt triskeles-horse harness with stylized griffin heads, Letnitsa Treasure (National Archaeological Museum, Sofia, inv. no. A606. Photo by Kr. Georgiev).

man. Around the adult's skeleton were found two silver jugs, four inscribed phialai, a wood quiver (gorythos) with many bronze arrowheads, iron spearheads, a bronze Chalkidian type helmet, a silver-gilt greave (knemis) and a group of four Greek bronze vessels for feasts. Close to the older man was the skeleton of a young Thracian prince, unusually placed face-down, killed by an iron spearhead apparently during combat. Still adorning him were an elegant gold wreath crowning his head, with a pair of heavy gold earrings with elaborate disc and lunate pendants found by the ears, as well as a gold hairpin and a tiny gold spoon. Also among the bones were gold buttons, pendants and rosette-shaped appliques apparently sewn to his dress. The third and last tomb of Vratsa had been partially robbed in antiquity. In its second chamber were skeletons of a man and a woman. Found alongside the man were gold and a silver jugs, a quiver with arrowheads, and iron spearheads.

Two galloping quadrigae (four-horsed chariots) with a man in a hauberk are represented on a gold jug. Its handle is shaped like the so-called 'Heracles' or reef knot. The female burial in this tomb also yielded gold jewelry and votive clay objects. The dating of the Vratsa tombs, facilitated by several Attic pottery vessels, show that the burials in the Mogilanska mogila mound occurred in about 375-340 BC.

A large accumulation of Thracian tombs from 4th-2nd centuries BC occurred in the Valley of Roses, near Kazanluk in South Bulgaria (fig.3). The best known of these is the Kazanluk Tomb, famous for its beautiful wall paintings of the early 3rd century BC. This is one of the most unique

masterpieces of Early Hellenistic pictorial art, not only in Thrace but throughout the entire Eastern Mediterranean basin. Despite the small surface containing the decorative friezes, the unknown artist has created a work of art, outwardly Thracian in its figural scenes, and exceptional in its character and impact. It has been suggested that the tomb was built during the reign of king Seuthes III, either for him personally or for a close noble relatives.

Seven more imposing new tombs have recently been uncovered in the south foothills of the Balkan Range near Shipka (fig.5) They consisted of developed façades which are notably different from one another. Not surprisingly, most of these tombs had been robbed in ancient times, and only one was absolutely untouched by treasure-hunters.

Ongoing discoveries: The new exhibition represents only a small fraction of Thracian art objects and



Fig.21: Two gold necklaces from Malka mogila mound near Shipka, ca. 325-300 BC (Museum of Iskra History, Kazanluk, no. A II 1581-1583. Photo by VIFOR).



Fig.20: Gold phiale with negroes' heads from Panagjurishte Treasure, ca. 325-300 BC (Archaeological Museum Plovdiv, inv. no. 3204, wt 845.7 g Photo by Kr. Georgiev).

Thracian Treasures from Bulgaria

results of recent excavations of Thracian mounds in Bulgaria. Several teams currently at work have field funds limited, unfortunately, to only a few months each year by current economic shortages. As elsewhere, it will take time for archaeologists to assimilate the results of excavation. It is quite clear, however, that the monuments of Thracian art now on display will delight and excite scholars as well as the general museum-going public.

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University of Sofia in 1997. He is currently taking postgraduate studies in Roman Archaeology and Epigraphy at the University of Cologne, Germany. He is a grandnephew of Professor Bogdan D. Filow (1883-1945).

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Fig.22 Silver gilt appliques (phalerae) from the Galiche Treasure, late 2nd-1st c. BC (photo: Kr. Georgiev).

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The Thracian Treasures Exhibit will be at the following locations:

The Saint Louis Art Museum
 Kimbell Art Museum, Ft. Worth
 M. H. DeYoung Memorial Museum, San Francisco
 New Orleans Museum of Art
 Memphis: Brooks Museum of Art
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 Washington, D.C. (Museum to be announced)

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 May 3 - July 19, 1998
 July 31 - Oct. 11, 1998
 Oct. 31, 1998 Jan. 4, 1999
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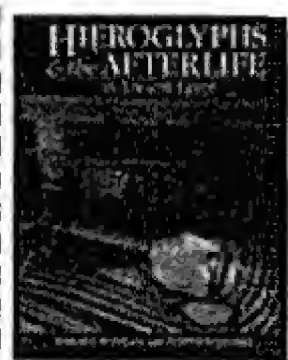
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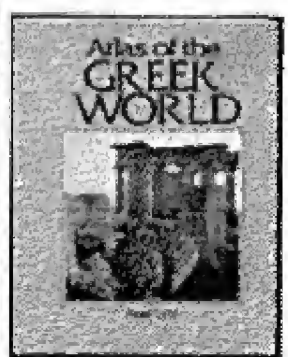
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Re-reading Herodotus on the Persian Campaigns in Thrace^{*}

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In memoriam Professoris Margaritae Tachevae

In order to establish our attitude towards Herodotus' account on Thrace and the Thracians we should ask if his information about this region is reliable. Back in 1990 David Asheri stated that "Herodotus could collect a great deal of information on Thrace even without leaving Athens, where a thriving Thracian community, with all its cults and traditional customs, was already established in his time. ... Reliance upon Herodotus should therefore be rated relatively high. Thrace, after all, is not India or Ethiopia: it lies near at hand, part of it even open to all Greeks to come and check. Athenian ex-servicemen and Greek-speaking resident Thracians could even attend Herodotus' famous lectures. He must have been rather circumspect concerning things known to many".¹

Of course, as has been perfectly said on another occasion, "Nobody is perfect", neither is Herodotus when writing his "Histories" thus demanding from the modern historian to approach this remarkable book with the necessary criticism. However, definitely not with hypercriticism,² as very often this hypercriticism is a product of modern ignorance, due to lack of evidence.

With new discoveries the situation is slowly changing and even some of the most unbelievable stories reported by Herodotus appear in a different light. At least this is what happened with the information about "those who live above the Crestonaeans."³ In the "Histories" we read that when a man among them dies, his wives vie for the title of most beloved wife and the chosen one would be slain and buried together with her dead husband.⁴ Though

*) I would like to express my gratitude to Michael Zahrt, who very kindly read my text, offering valuable criticism and suggesting various corrections. Of course, all responsibility for any errors is my own. Thanks are due also to Robert Rollinger for helping me with literature that was difficult to obtain.

1 Asheri 1990, 133–134. See also Xydopoulos 2007, 695: "Thrace is far closer to Athens and the rest of Southern Greece than e.g. Egypt or Libya. Let us not forget the numerous colonies in the area of Northern Aegean, where autopsy could be easily performed." And further Xydopoulos 2007, 697: "The Athenian public of Herodotus was well aware of these foreigners (i.e. Thracians – D.B.), who either as *metoikoi* or slaves were living in Athens (...) Thrace was not a *terra incognita* after all. And both Herodotus and his contemporaries knew that."

2 See e. g. Fehling 1971 who maintains that Herodotus never saw any of the places he claimed to have visited and that he fabricated the citations as well as the information conveyed in them.

3 On the attitude towards this information prior to some recent archaeological publications see e. g. Sieberer 1995, 154–155 with literature. See also Bichlers' (2007, 150) understanding of the evidence given by Herodotus about human sacrifices.

4 Hdt. V. 5: "The Thracians who live above the Crestonaeans observe the following customs. Each man among them has several wives; and no sooner does a man die than a sharp contest ensues among the

sounding as an invention, this evidence was confirmed by the discoveries during archaeological excavations, conducted in the village of Isperihovo (Pazardzhik district) situated on the northern side of the West Rhodopi Mountain (Figure 1).⁵ In a grave dated to the 7th–6th century BC a body of a man together with a body of a beheaded woman beside him (with the cranium on her ribcage) was found. The couple obviously belongs to the people defined by Herodotus as “those who dwell above the Crestonaeans.” The most amazing thing concerning this couple is the fact that it appears on the right place and in the right time when compared with the evidence in the “Histories”. Doubtless, it is reasonable to look for “those who dwell above (*katyperthe*) the Crestonaeans” in the region of the North-west Rhodopi⁶ since *katyperthe* means both “above, atop” but also “down from above”.⁷

On the other hand, a recently published idea argues convincingly that “das in 7, 108, 2 genannte Mesambrie nie existiert hat, sondern seine einmalige Nennung bei Herodot einem Irrtum bzw. einer Unachtsamkeit verdankt.”⁸ These two cases show the necessity of a careful re-reading of each piece of Herodotus’ evidence on Thrace and the Thracians in order to estimate what, why and how it is said by the historian.⁹ It is a long way to be followed. Here I will present the results of an analysis, devoted to just a small section of this way – the Persian campaigns in European Thrace as seen by the historian of Halicarnassus.¹⁰ In the late 6th and early 5th century BC European Thrace expanded westwards to the Thermaic Gulf, as attested by Hekataios (F.Gr.H., Fr. 146).¹¹ The territory we should consider here reaches northwards the river Istros (modern Danube).

wives upon the question, which of them all the husband loved most tenderly; the friends of each eagerly plead on her behalf, and she to whom the honour is adjudged, after receiving the praises both of men and women, is slain over the grave by the hand of her next of kin, and then buries with her husband. The others are sorely grieved, for nothing is considered such a disgrace.” (English translation by George Rawlinson).

5 Delev, Bozhkova, Boteva 2002, 123–125.

6 For a different localization see Asheri (1990, 149), who identifies the territory mentioned by Herodotus in V. 5 with “the area of Mt. Dysoron”, i.e. to the west of the Lower Strymon. The Bulgarian name of Mt. Dysoron is Krusha.

7 Liddell, Scott 1953, 856. Asheri translates it as “above” (Asheri 1990, 149) as well as “beyond” (Asheri 1990, 139).

8 Zahrnt 2008, 118–120: “Dieser Ort kann seine Existenz der Tatsache verdanken, dass Hekataios das Kap Serreion, das deutlich zwei Küstenebenen voneinander trennt und das er als Bezugspunkt für die Nennung der Städte in den beiden Ebenen genommen haben kann, nach Süden hatte vorspringen lassen (...). Aus der Richtungsangabe bei Hekataios könnte nun bei Herodot durch Unachtsamkeit oder auf sonstigem Wege ein Ortsname geworden sein...” On the vast problem of Herodotus’ indebtedness to Hecataeus see Schepens 2006, 83, note 7.

9 Cf. Briant 1990, 111: “Doit-on pour autant nier toute valeur à ses [d’Herodote – D.B.] renseignements? Je ne le crois pas. Chaque cas doit être étudié avec précision.”

10 The Asian Thracians were also affected by the Persian military campaigns as clearly reported by Herodotus (VII. 75. 2) but they will not be considered here.

11 See also Hdt. VII. 127.



Figure 1: Ancient Thrace

Legend:

Istros – ancient river name

(*Tundja*) – modern river name

H A I M O S – mountain name

Odessos – ancient settlement

(Isperihovo) – modern settlement

|| (Rishki pass) – modern name of a mountain pass

Herodotus' information about the Persian campaigns in European Thrace concerns the reigns of only two Persian kings – Darius I (520–486)¹² and Xerxes I (486–465).¹³ The development of the Achaemenid Empire during these two reigns was extremely dynamic, which resulted in several different chronological layers in Herodotus' account. Some of them are clearly definable but the greater part of his stories remains undated and is still disputable. The personal choice of each modern historian to put together the different events into an acceptable chronological order leads to reconstructions that differ substantially from each other although they all are based on the same sources.¹⁴ Accordingly, trying to present an exhaustive review of the countless attempts at chronological and historical evaluation of Herodotus' report on the Persian expeditions in Thrace is in my opinion useless,¹⁵ especially after the several thorough analysis published in the last two decades by prominent historians.¹⁶

However, several years ago a detailed re-reading of Herodotus' account on Darius' Scythian expedition and his route through Thrace (Hdt. IV.89–93) resulted in some alternative views about the Persian activity in the region at the end of the 6th century BC.¹⁷ The following text is based on this earlier study of mine but many new further observations are discussed as well. All of them appear in the following lines due to the fact that they offer some different (compared with the current literature) possibilities to interpret the respective Herodotus' information. Important historical events connected with the Persian campaigns in Thrace, among them the expedition under the command of Mardonius in 492,¹⁸ are not discussed here because such additional possibilities are not at hand so far.

King Darius and his general Megabazus campaigning in Thrace

Within Darius' route through Eastern Thrace during his Scythian campaign we are informed of three fixed points. The Persian army entered Thrace *via* Bosporos / Byzantion (Hdt. IV.89.3) and reached the Istros at “the point where its channels separate”, at a distance of two days' travel from the sea the Istros upstream (Hdt. IV.89.2). At a two days' land travel from the sea was situated another point in Darius' itinerary through Thrace: According to Herodotus (IV.90.2) the sources of the Tearos river, where Darius pitched his

12 Dating according to Briant 1996, 151. However Balcer (1987, 12) dates the beginning of Darius' reign in 522.

13 According to some modern historians Darius' Scythian campaign “is an out-and-out prefiguration” of Xerxes' venture against Greece – see Rollinger 2003, 267 and Sieberer 1995, 235. For an opposite opinion see Kienast 1996, 295–296, note 34.

14 A good illustration can be found in the respective chapter of the Cambridge Ancient History, where the two co-authors explain that their opinions on the most essential issue – the extent of the Persian rule in Thrace – differ substantially (Fol, Hammond 1988, 245).

15 For a short review on the main ideas see Archibald 1998, 84.

16 Balcer 1988; Fol, Hammond 1988; Hammond 1988; Asheri 1990, 156–160; Harmatta 1990, 128–130; Tacheva 1992; Zahrnt 1992; Sieberer 1995, 230–266; Briant 1996; Zahrnt 1997; Archibald 1998, 79–90; Stronk 1998–1999; Tacheva 2000; Jordanov 2003; Badian 2007. From the earlier literature see Castritius 1972; Fol 1972, 88–101, 115–119, 214; Danov 1976, 255–281 and Pajkowski 1983.

17 Boteva-Boyanova 2000, 17–45; 130–141. I presented part of these alternative views at the Second International Congress on Black Sea Antiquities (Boteva 2001) but the proceedings of this congress remain unpublished so far.

18 On the problems of the respective Herodotean evidence see the detailed analysis of Zahrnt 1992. See also Briant 1996, 168–170; Archibald 1998, 87–88 and Paspalas 2006, 92–94.

first camp in Thrace, were at “a two days’ journey” from the town of Apollonia Pontica, i.e. from the coast.

In my opinion it is obvious, that the Great King did neither take a route far inland,¹⁹ nor reach the Istros, marching close to the Black Sea coast.²⁰ In fact, Darius may well have chosen a route lying at a distance of approximately two days’ travel from the coast.²¹ Of course, due either to the peculiarities of the terrain or for strategic reasons, some detours were to be expected.²²

Neither Apollonia, nor Mesambria appear in Herodotus’ text (IV.93) as a part of Darius’ route.²³ I guess, the Greek historian mentions these well known Greek Pontic colonies only in order to explain to his Athenian listeners the Thracian ethnonyms of the Scyrmidae and the Nipsaeans who were, obviously, unknown – or at least less known – in Athens.²⁴ In any case it is worth asking whether the Persian attitude towards the Milesian colonies on the Western Black Sea coast (e. g. Apollonia and Odessos) was influenced by the synchronous status of their metropolis within the Darius’ empire.²⁵

A similar situation could be recognized in Hdt. IV.92.1, informing that Darius “came to another river called Arteskos,²⁶ which flows through the land of the Odrysians;” on the banks of this river the Great king ordered his army to build great cairns of stones. This is

19 Venedikov 1970, 27–30; Fol, Hammond 1988, 238–239; Hammond 1980, 53ff. It is unlikely that during his Scythian campaign Darius entered deeply inside Thrace, even only because Herodotus gives no hint that the Darius’ army crossed the Hebros (Maritsa) river.

20 Zahrt 1997, 94.

21 For this road see Beševliev 1969. Hollenstein 1975, 43 shows evidences for the road in question during the Roman period.

22 An archaeological site dating to 6th century BC and excavated near the village of Prilep (Sungurlare region, Bulgaria), situated at the south entrance of the Rishki pass (405 m, in the eastern part of the Haimos Range) indicates that the numerous deceased buried together in a common grave died during a military conflict. In this region along the Kamchia valley there was located the border between the Thracian tribes of the Nipseans to the south and the Getae to the north. Therefore the archaeologists incline to connect the find with Darius’ Scythian campaign (see Georgieva, Momchilov 2003, 66). Personally, I do not dare name any of the Haimos passes as used by Darius’ army. Still, the Rishki pass accords with the scarce Herodotean evidence about the itinerary of the Great King through Eastern Thrace.

23 The date of the foundation of Mesambria Pontica is still disputable because the earliest archaeological material could not be distinctively dated to late 6th or early 5th century BC. Thus, the dating of Mesambria’s foundation in the 6th century BC (see e.g. Boardman 1981, 290–291), as well as the opinion, according to which this Greek colony was founded only in 494/493 (see e.g. Archibald 1998, 81 with a reference to Hdt. VI.5.33) are both to be taken into consideration. On the archaeology and epigraphy of Mesambria see Velkov 1985 and the newly published study of Gyuzelev (2008, 78–91; 200–222).

24 See the suggestion that Herodotus’ text passages could be more meaningful if we take them to have been read before an Athenian audience or at least written with Athenian readers in mind (Momigliano 1978, 65).

25 See recently Badian 2007.

26 In the codices we do find different spelling of this hydronym – Gočeva, Tăpkova-Zaïmova, Velkov 1981, 211. Five codices, four of them dating from the 14th – 15th century, and only one (Romanus bibliothecae Angelicanae Augustinorum) – from the 11th century, attest the spelling *Artiskos*. This is the spelling accepted by Detschew 1976, 29. The current literature however widely accepts the spelling *Arteskos*, which appears in three early codices, among them the earliest one (Codex Laurentianus LXX 3), dating to the 10th century.

the only place within Herodotus' text where the ethnonym of the Odrysians appears and it has been interpreted most controversially. According to some authors it gives an indication that at the end of the 6th century BC the Odrysians were strong enough to deserve mentioning. Others assert that during Darius' Scythian campaign the Odrysians were still an unimportant tribe and Herodotus did not feel the need to say what their fate was like. Some scholars insist that this text hints at a Persian victory over the Odrysians who fell under Persian control, while others find no military clash on the banks of Arteskos because the relations between Darius and the Odrysians were settled diplomatically.²⁷

In my opinion, the ethnonym of the Odrysians appears here, similar to the case of Apollonia and Mesambria, not because of Darius' route, but as a needed explanation of something unfamiliar to the Athenians. Obviously, Herodotus felt the need to explain the hydronym of the Arteskos to his audience in Pericles' Athens because of the cairns of stones left by the Persian army on the bank of this river. He based his explanation on the Odrysian ethnonym which was popular enough in Athens after mid-5th century BC. This is clearly visible from the change of the tense, used by Herodotus in the sentence here under scrutiny (Hdt. IV.92.1).²⁸

In fact, the Odrysians are mentioned neither among the tribes who gave themselves up to Darius without a struggle, nor among those, who were enslaved by the Persians. It seems that during his Scythian campaign the Great King did not even reach the Odrysian tribal homeland, which in my opinion should be looked for westwards in the region through which the young Hebros flows.²⁹

27 To follow this discussion within the Bulgarian literature will take a lot of space. On the other hand, as I am trying to show, the appearance of the Odrysians in this context is irrelevant for the time of Darius' Scythian expedition.

28 For a similar observation concerning another Herodotus' evidence see Hatzopoulos, Loukopoulou 1992, 20–21: “tandis que Hérodote emploie des temps historiques pour rapporter l'action des Perses, il utilise le present pour la description de “la route directe”...”.

29 The localization of the Odrysian tribal homeland is still a problematic issue. Initially it was situated in the Agrianes valley, i.e. to the east of the Maritsa River (Danov 1976, 119–122 with lit.). Similar localization with a slightly different definition is given by Stronk (1998–1999, 68), who states that the Odrysians together with the Thynians “were strategically placed at the eastern end of the Thracian plain.” Alexander Fol was the first to search the Odrysian's homeland in “the catchment area near the now-a-days town of Odrin” (Fol 1972, 118), i.e. “the catchment area” of the rivers Arda, Tundja and Maritsa. This view is prevailing in the literature so far, as clearly seen by the following statement: “the core of Odrysian territory was formed by the fertile valley of the Maritsa, Tundja and lower Arda” (Archibald 1998, 111 with footnotes 76–77; see also 102: “On a minimalist view, the nucleus (of the Odrysian homelands – D.B.) would have lain westwards and northwards of the Strandja Planina, extending in the direction of the middle reaches of the Tonzos and Hebros”). As far as I know, no modern historian when studying the problem has turned for relevant evidence to the later ancient sources although they could be of some help. When I tried to find information about the Odrysian tribal homeland in the Roman writers, I came across three testimonies, the earliest of them dating to the 1st century AD and the latest – to the 4th century AD: Plin., NH, IV, 40, ... *Odrysarum gens fundit Hebrum*...; Amm. Marc., XXVII, 4, 10: ... *prope amnem Hebrum a celsis Odrysarum montibus defluentem*... Hebrus takes its source in the Odrysian lands according to Solinus (10. 5) as well. The evidence does not stimulate the seeking of the Odrysian tribal territory so far eastwards, as traditionally accepted. Recent research has shown convincingly that the region of the Duvanli necropolis could be connected with the Odrysians, although I would prefer not to “label” the tumuli with precise names belonging to the Odrysian royal family (Tacheva 1992a; on the necropolis see Filow 1934; Filow, Welkow 1930; Fol, Hammond 1988, 249 and

Saying this, I do not reject the possibility of some arrangements between Darius and the Odrysians.³⁰ But if such arrangements existed at all, they were in my opinion not settled during Darius' expedition against the Scythians.³¹

As far as the King's route through Thrace is concerned, two different phases are clearly recognizable in Herodotus' report. The "first phase" concerns the area between Byzantion and the river Arteskos where we hear of hydronyms only (Hdt. IV.89.3–92.1): After crossing the Bosphoros, Darius stopped at the sources of the river Tearos.³² Marching forwards, he came to the river Arteskos. In this report we do not hear of any tribes or any local people.³³ Thus, we have to choose between two possibilities: either to accept that Darius was moving through an uninhabited territory – which was surely not the case, – or to admit the probability that Darius was moving through a territory whose relations with Persia had been already regulated before the start of his Scythian expedition.³⁴

Herodotus' account of "the second phase" of Darius' itinerary – the one after leaving the river Arteskos and before arriving at the Istros – is based on ethnonyms (Hdt. IV.93). The Greek historian reports that "the Thracians of Salmydessos", as well as the Scyrmiadae and the Nipseans gave themselves up to Darius without a struggle.³⁵ Herodotus states explicitly that "the first people" actually subdued by the Great King were the Getae. Thus he implies once again that the relations between Persia and the local population in the area defined by hydronyms had been settled prior to the Scythian campaign. It is highly symptomatic that the line between these two "phases" in Herodotus' report is marked by the cairns³⁶ of stones on the bank of Arteskos river cast by the Persian soldiers obeying the King's orders (Hdt. IV.92).³⁷ Unfortunately, the historian left us wondering whether Darius' army crossed this river, or just reached it and continued further without crossing it. Nowadays each of the two possibilities has its champions.

Archibald 1998, 85, 103, 109, 158–166). According to Archibald "Duvanli lies slightly outside the areas which historians traditionally associate with the Odrysians" (Archibald 1998, 103).

30 On possible arrangements between Darius and the Odrysians see Tacheva 2000; Tacheva 2006, 22–28.

31 These relations could have been settled either prior to the Scythian expedition (on such a possibility see further my text here), or only after it when Megabazus, being appointed as "strategos of Europe", "marched the army through Thrace, reducing to the king's rule every city and every tribe of those who lived there (in Thrace – D.B.); for the orders of Darius were these, to make Thrace subject to him" (Hdt V. 2. 2).

32 Different identifications of the river Tearos have been proposed so far – see Beševliev 1975; Danov 1976, 121 and 264; Müller 1997, 788 and 942–948 with lit.

33 Struve 1968, 106 makes a reference to the lack of information in Hdt 4. 89–96 about Darius' military activity against the Greek colonies and the Thracian tribes in the southern part of the West Pontic area. According to Archibald (1998, 82) "Herodotus seems to be more interested in the rivers of Thrace, about which he had done some detailed research, than in its inhabitants. He refers only to those tribes whose names would have been common knowledge to the Pontic Greeks."

34 Tzvetkova 2008, 294 explains this situation with the "mediatory function" of Miltiades the Younger between the South-East Thracian tribes and the Persian kings. According to her Miltiades took part in the Scythian expedition of king Darius as "effect of earlier friendly relations with the Persians, dating eventually since the time of Miltiades the Elder." Archibald (1998, 80) defines Miltiades' links with the Persian court as "more than merely cordial."

35 Stronk's suggestion to see in them Odrysian tribes (Stronk 1998–1999, 57) is for me unacceptable.

36 Theodossiev (1995, 383) prefers to translate Herodotus' word *kolonos* as "tumulus".

37 According to Fol, Hammond (1988, 239) the fact of Darius' "ordering his army to build great cairns of stones in the valley of the Arteskos" makes clear "that he came to occupy."

There is a basic problem when we try to identify the river Arteskos.³⁸ As a rule the modern historians transfer our modern notion about the river system in East Thrace back into the 6th and 5th century BC. According to this modern notion the main river there is the Maritsa (ancient Hebros), with the Tundja, known during the Roman period as Tonzos, being a right affluent, and the Arda, supposed to be the ancient Arteskos, being a left affluent. However there is clear evidence that in the Antiquity the rivers in the region were perceived in a different way. During the reign of Emperor Antoninus Pius the mint of Hadrianopolis (the present day Turkish town of Edirne)³⁹ issued coins with the representation of three river deities on the reverse, presumably Hebros, Tonzos and Arteskos (Figure 2).⁴⁰



Figure 2: Hadrianopolis coin struck in the name of Marcus Aurelius Caesar (AD 139–161).

Youroukova 1987, 123, no 40

In fact, the sole hydronym that appears on the Hadrianopolis coins struck under the same Emperor is not the Hebros, as we would expect, but the Tonzos (Figure 3),⁴¹ obviously recognized as the most important of the three.⁴² No doubt, when identifying the river Arteskos we are obliged to try viewing it with the eyes of the ancient people.

38 The issue is very controversial (see Danov 1976, 121; Müller 1997, 788–810 with lit.), due to the lack of indication in Herodotus' report that Darius crossed the river Hebros with his army. Thus, the ancient historian leaves the impression that the Persian army was moving in the area of some right tributaries of the river Hebros (Hdt. IV.89.3–92). On the other hand, from a linguistic point of view the ancient hydronym Arteskos has been connected with the modern Arda, a left affluent of Maritsa (ancient Hebros) – Velkov 1963.

39 The Bulgarian name of this city is Odrin.

40 Youroukova 1987, 71, Figure 1, 123, no 40 (coin with inv. no 28648 from the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris), Table IV, no 40. On the obverse this coin bears the bust and the name of Marcus Aurelius as a Caesar (AD 139–161).

41 Youroukova 1987, 71, Figure 3, 120, no 19 (coin from a private collection in Sofia), Table III, no 19. On the obverse this coin bears the bust and the name of Emperor Antonius Pius (AD 138–161).

42 Youroukova 1987, 262: "... pour les habitants de Hadrianopolis la divinité fluviale principale est Tonzos ..."



Figure 3: Hadrianopolis coin struck in the name of Emperor Antoninus Pius (AD 138–161).

Youroukova 1987, 120, no 19

The cairns of stones left by the Persian army on the bank of river Arteskos seem to mark some sort of a borderline between two territories which differed in their status towards Persia at the start of Darius' Scythian expedition. In this case we have to seek the Arteskos solely among such rivers that might have been suitable in the Antiquity to serve as a defensible frontier. As such I do recognize the river line flowing in a north-south direction and created by the modern rivers of Tundja (after its big elbow not far from the present day town of Yambol) and Maritsa (Figure 1).⁴³ In my opinion the fact that the rivers of Tundja, Maritsa and Arda flow parallel in a west-east direction within a relatively small territory and further they mix their waters in a common flow, running in the north-south direction, could have caused in the Antiquity a transfer of the hydronym.

To the south-southeast of the borderline, marked by the cairns of stones left by the Persian army on the bank of the river Arteskos, lay the territory which probably had been taken under Persian control prior to Darius' Scythian campaign.⁴⁴ If we have to describe this territory with the landmarks reported by Herodotus, it looks like a triangle formed by Byzantion to the south-southeast, the lands neighbouring with Salmydessos to the north-northeast and the river Arteskos to the west-northwest. Within the area thus described the Great King was moving as a sovereign holding control over it.

I incline to expand this triangle into a quadrangle with the Thracian Chersonese as a southwest corner. This supposition could explain why we find Miltiades the Younger, "a strategos and tyrant" of Thracian Chersonese, participating in Darius' Scythian campaign, as

43 Compare Detschew (1976, 29): Artiskos (*sic*), "vielleicht identisch mit Tonzos."

44 I am not going to discuss the problem whether Thrace was administrated by Darius as a satrapy or in another way (for details on the discussion see Zahrnt 1997; for a numismatist viewpoint see Picard 2000) since, in my opinion, we do not have at our disposal reliable and relevant evidence that could give us the right to insist on whatever.

is clearly seen in the episode at the bridge over the Istros (Hdt. IV.137.1).⁴⁵ A Persian over-sea activity in the region of the Propontis prior to the Scythian expedition should actually be indisputable as we find Metrodoros, the tyrant of Prokonnesos, also taking part in Darius' military campaign against the Scythians (Hdt. IV.138.1).

Beyond the stone cairns left by the Persian soldiers at the Arteskos, the situation was obviously different. In this territory Darius had to settle his relations with the local Thracian population while marching against the Scythians and therefore the Persian soldiers were expected to be exposed to danger.⁴⁶

It is obvious, in my opinion, that Herodotus' report on Darius' Scythian campaign offers some data about an unknown earlier Persian activity in Europe. The achievements of this earlier "European" undertaking, recognizable on the basis of Persian sources as well,⁴⁷ were broadened during Darius' expedition against the Scythians as far as the river Istros to the north.

Now let me approach the issue from another angle. Claudio Masetti's identification of the seventh king in the Late Babylonian Dynastic Prophecy with Darius I,⁴⁸ not Darius III as proposed by Albert Grayson⁴⁹ and accepted indisputably in the current literature,⁵⁰ is in my opinion very convincing. However, I do not agree with Masetti that the war against the "Hanaean army" which, according to the Prophecy, Darius I waged after five years of sovereignty (ca. 515 BC), should be identified with his Scythian expedition.⁵¹ The details about this Hanaean war provided by the Prophecy show a different situation from what we know about the Scythian campaign: during the former the Hanaeans attacked the Persian army and managed to plunder it but after that Darius refitted his army and overthrew the Hanae-

45 See here above footnote 34. On Miltiades the Younger as a ruler of Thracian Chersonese see Tzvetkova 2008, 135–155, 290–293; Archibald 1998, 80; Loukopoulou 1989, 83–89 with lit.

46 Boteva-Boyanova 2000, 35, note 69 with a possible Caucasian parallel: Going to war, a Caucasian epic hero orders his soldiers to throw a stone on a place, pointed specially for this purpose. Returning from the military campaign each soldier took a stone from this same place. Thus, the stones that were left on the spot were regarded not only as a counting of the soldiers that fell far away from their homes, but also as their memorial. However, Herodotus reports a different way of counting the enormous Xerxes' army in 480 BC (VII. 60. 2–3). But see Hammond 1988, 533, who supposes that Herodotus "wrote tongue in cheek," because the method of enumeration of the Persian army "was familiar to the Greek shepherds."

47 Analysing Persian sources Struve 1968, 106–107 was the first to insist that the European coast of Hellespont and Propontis was occupied by Persia prior to Darius' Scythian war. He ascribed this activity to Otanes, son of Pharnaspes.

48 Masetti 1982, 107–108. According to his "reading" of the Prophecy "the second *lacuna* in the text coincide with the reign of Cambyses;" "the sixth king should be identified with Navuhodonosr III–IV," while "the seventh one – with Darius I. The third *lacuna* in the text includes obviously Darius' I reign after his campaign in Europe and the Xerxes' époque. The eighth and ninth kings are Artaxerxes I and Xerxes II, while the usurper to come after them is Sogdianus. The text as a whole refers to events dated to 626–424 BC." (Masetti 1982, 108).

49 Grayson 1975, 26–37.

50 Van der Spek 2003; Neujahr 2005. Obviously none of the two knows Masetti's idea and the arguments the latter put forward when proving it. However the very structure of the Prophecy seems to advocate better in favour of Masetti's reading. I am much obliged to Dr. Kabalan Mukarzel (University of Sofia) for the possibility to discuss with him this monument.

51 Masetti 1982, 108–110.

ans, taking “extensive booty” into his palace.⁵² Obviously, the Persian oversea activity in the region of Propontis met at the beginning with certain difficulties.

Because of “the King List of the Hellenistic Period 8” with its information that Seleucus I was assassinated in the land of the Hanaeans, “the district identified with these people is placed in eastern Thrace.”⁵³ Since Seleucus was assassinated in Lysimachia (App., Syr. 329–334), in the northern part of the Thracian Chersonesos, the land of the Hanaeans certainly includes south-eastern Thrace in the area bordering the Hellespont and the Propontis. Thus, Darius’ Hanaean war described in the Prophecy was most probably against the population of the North coast of Propontis and its hinterland, i.e. against the tribes and cities in the quadrangular region which emerges from Hdt. IV.89–93, Hdt. IV.137.1 and Hdt. IV.138.1. Consequently, the dating of the Scythian expedition in the Tabula Capitolina (ca. 513/512 BC) should be estimated as a correct one,⁵⁴ since it obviously postdated the Hanaean war (ca. 515 BC) reported by the Late Babylonian Dynastic Prophecy.

An important question arises here: who managed to subdue the oversea lands in the region of the Propontis (Prokonnesos) and the Hellespont (Thracian Chersonese) for Darius? If my young colleague Miroslav Izdimirski is right when supposing that starting in the late twenties of the 6th century BC Megabazus was probably the governor of Daskyleion and Hellespontian Phrygia right after Mitrobates,⁵⁵ we would have a suitable candidate to be named when trying to answer the question. There is a hint in Herodotus’ “Histories” pointing at a doubtless very successful career of Megabazus, preceding his appointment as “strategos of Europe” on Darius’ way back from the Scythian lands (IV.143.1). When telling the story of this appointment Herodotus says explicitly that in the past Megabazus had been given honour by Darius, who had declared his preference to have as many men like Megabazus as there were seeds in a pomegranate than to have Greece under his rule (Hdt.

52 Grayson 1975, 35; Van der Spek 2003, 317.

53 Grayson 1975a, 256, s.v. Hanu. Neujahr (2005, 102, footnote 8) quotes Grayson’s explanation in order to state that “in the Hellenistic period there is an apparent identification of the land of the Hanû as Thrace.” Recently Van der Spek (2003, 328) identified the Hanaeans with Macedonians without any comment. However, none of these two meanings is to be found in CAD (6, 82–83, s.v. hanû).

54 Balcer 1972, 100–110. Being dated to the 15 AD, the Tabula Capitolina (TC) counts 527 years from the year when Darius built the bridge against the Scythians (TC, II, 24–25). Thus, we acquire the year 513/512 BC. Fol, Hammond (1988, 235) date the Scythian campaign to “c. 513 BC” with the note that “the date is disputed.” Briant (1996, 154) pinpoints it to 513 BC. Most recently Badian (2007, 36) speaks about “around 513” but again with a note that “the date of Darius’ Scythian expedition cannot be known for certain.” See Balcer (1972, 129) who dates Darius Scythian campaign in 519 BC, followed by Cameron 1975. But see later Balcer (1987, 44 and 154 with note 3; Balcer 1988, 4–5). Some historians date this campaign in 514 BC – Struve 1968, 101–102; Forrest 1986, 37. See however Boardman, Griffin, Murray (1986, 835) where “Darius’ Scythian expedition” is dated to 514 BC but 512 is the year when “Darius conquers Thrace.” Danov (1976, 255) dates the expedition in “514–513 BC,” while Chernenko (1984, 8) insists on 512 BC. According to Harmatta “the date 513 BC for Darius’ campaign against the European Scythians can be regarded as correct to 60 % probability and as deviating from the real date at the most by 1–2 years, to 40 % probability. Accordingly, we can date Darius’ expedition against the European Scythians in all probability between 515–513 BC and to 514/513 BC in 60 % probability.” (Harmatta 1976, 17).

55 Izdimirski 2008 defines him as a “satrap”; Balcer (1988, 19) also suggests that Megabazus had governed Daskyleion and defines the status of Daskyleion prior to the satrapal appointment of Megabates as “presatrapal”.

IV.143.2). The meaning of this story is obvious – by the time of the appointment as “strategos of Europe” Megabazus had managed to prove himself successful and very useful for Darius’ plans of conquest; otherwise the comparison would not have been the one we do actually hear about.

Thus we come to another basic issue: Why did Darius choose Megabazus to be strategos of Europe? I incline to think that Darius chose Megabazus because he was familiar with the region which implies that the successful general had gained his fame exactly in the Hellespontian region. If this supposition is correct a further question arises: is it by chance that Herodotus defines Megabazus within IV.143–144 in two different ways? When the historian first mentions him as appointed by Darius, his office is defined as “strategos of Europe” (IV.143.1). Later, after telling the two *bons mots* connected with Megabazus – the pomegranate one and the second one, said to have left an immortal memory among the Hellespontians, according to which while being in Byzantion he called the Kalchedonians blind – Herodotus defines the Persian general as “strategos of the Hellespontian land” and informs us that while being in this office Megabazus subdued those, who were unwilling to join the Medians (IV.144.3).⁵⁶ In my opinion here exists again a possibility to distinguish two different chronological layers – the first one predating Scythian campaign of Darius and corresponding with Megabazus being “strategos of the Hellespontian land” and the second one closely following this campaign with Megabazus being appointed as “strategos of Europe”; i.e. now he received under his authority not only the Hellespontian land, but also the newly subdued people in Europe,⁵⁷ the Getae for instance.⁵⁸ This re-reading of Hdt. IV.143–144 corresponds with the analysis of Hdt. IV.89–93 proposed above where exactly the same two chronological layers appeared and a similar historical situation emerged.

Going further to the fifth book of the “Histories” we do again meet Megabazus most probably in two different chronological layers. This is the sole possible way to put in accordance Herodotus’ statements on the one hand that Megabazus “marched the army through Thrace, reducing to the king’s rule every city and every tribe of those who lived there; for the orders of Darius were these, to make Thrace subject to him” (V.2.2) and on the other – that Megabazus managed to subdue “the coastal parts” of Thrace (V.10).⁵⁹ In my opinion the two parts of this information are organized in a reverse order, i.e. the second part refers to an earlier stage of Megabazus campaigns in Thrace – either to the time when being “strategos of the Hellespontian land” he subdued the coastal parts of Propontian and Hellespontian Thrace or only to the initial stage of his campaigns westwards. The first information that Megabazus marched through Thrace, most probably corresponds to a later

56 An interesting comparison between Darius’ Scythian expedition and Megabazus’ activity in Thrace is proposed by Reinhold Bichler (see Bichler 2007, 152).

57 Note the definition in Hdt. IV.89.1: “Darius, after rewarding Mandrocles, passed into Europe” (underlying is mine, D.B.). On Herodotus’ idea of Europe see Sieberer 1995.

58 The Persian rule over the Getae was of a short duration clearly seen by the fact that we do not find them in the Xerxes’ army marching against Greece in 480 BC. According to Fol, Hammond 1988, 247 they “escaped from Persian rule at some time between 492 and 480 BC.” However I am not inclined to fix here any lower chronological limit, as a period prior to 492 BC, at least synchronous with the Ionian revolt, is also possible.

59 This obvious contradiction makes Archibald (1998, 84) stating: “It seems unwise to take any one of Herodotus’ statements too literary.”

stage of his activity in the North Aegean region. I incline to accept that this later stage could be identified with a time when he was already referred to as “strategos of Thrace” (Hdt. V.14.1), which possibly followed his appointment as “strategos of Europe” and which came as a result of his first successful campaigns westwards in Thrace (Hdt. V.2.2).⁶⁰

The reconstruction of Megabazus’ career up to this point can be summarized in the following way: at a certain moment (ca. 515 BC), prior to Darius’ Scythian expedition, Megabazus managed to put under Persian control the coastal region of Hellespontian (and Propontian) Thrace, which brought him the office of “strategos of the Hellespontian land”. After Darius had entered Europe (ca. 513/512 BC) on his way to Scythia and subdued or conquered different Thracian tribes, the newly gained Persian possessions were given under the governorship of the successful general Megabazus, who was appointed as “strategos of Europe” and was ordered to make Thrace subject to the Great King. Starting the next period of his glorious military career in the overseas region, Megabazus managed to subdue further Thracian territories which caused the change in the name of his office – “strategos of Thrace”.⁶¹

Two very important questions remain – when was Perinthus subjugated by Megabazus and when exactly was Doriskos taken under Persian control?

When starting his report on the Thracians Herodotus repeats the information given in IV.144.3 that Megabazus subdued the Hellespontians who were “unwilling to join the Medians” but also specifies that the first among them to be subdued were the Perinthians (V.1.1; V.2.1). In my opinion, the information in V.1.1 gives the impression that Perinthus was subdued only after the Scythian campaign. On the other hand, the analysis of IV.89–93, IV.137.1–138. 1 and IV.143–144 revealed the possibility that the North coast of the Propontis and its hinterland were subdued by the Persians prior to this campaign. As a matter of fact, from a historical point of view both possibilities are acceptable – Perinthus could have been the last city in the region that had managed to keep its autonomy until the end of the Scythian expedition⁶² and therefore the first to be conquered after it, but it is also possible that this important colony had been subdued before Darius passed into Europe.⁶³ We do need more information in order to reconstruct correctly the historical events.

The case of Doriskos at the mouth of the river Hebros is similar, because Herodotus’ short report on the history of this fortress (VII.59.1) seems to imply two different stages of

60 According to Zahrnt (1992, 271; 1997, 95) Herodotus mentions Megabazus’ success in conquering Thrace (V.2.2) as an occasion to introduce his Thracian logos. I accept this opinion with the needed explanation that Herodotus starts with the final results of Megabazus’ activity in Thrace and only after that he presents the earlier events.

61 Fol and Hammond suppose “that the Greek cities on both sides of the waterway which connects the Aegean with the Black Sea formed a separate region for purposes of administration; for Otanes operated as ‘general of the men of the sea’ (V.25.1), in contrast to Megabazus ‘general in Thrace’ (V.14.1), and the Hellespont was differentiated from Thrace at VII.106.1.” (Fol, Hammond 1988, 248).

62 Fol, Hammond 1988, 243; Sayer 1998, 71.

63 A further possibility is proposed by Archibald (1998, 81): “The immediate outcome of the Skythian expedition was a series of revolts in the Hellespontine region. Megabazos was given instructions to capture ‘Thrace’ and proceed to attack Perinthos (Hdt. 5.1; 11), probably followed by Byzantion and Chalkedon (4.144). These cities were accused of failing to support Dareios’ expeditionary force and even of plundering the troops returning from Skythia (Hdt. 5.27).”

its early development. The historian states on the one hand that in the coastal territory, through which the Hebros flows, a royal fortress had been built and its name is Doriskos. On the other hand he explains that Darius put a garrison there during his campaign against the Scythians. Here we are obliged to explain, of course if possible, how the Great King was able to put a garrison in Doriskos, if according to Hdt. IV.89.3 he and his army entered Europe *via* the Bosphorus. Some modern historians assert that the report in the “Histories” is not complete and that the Persian army had entered Europe not only *via* the Bosphorus, but also *via* the mouth of the Hebros.⁶⁴ Others connect the construction of this royal fortress not with the beginning of the Scythian campaign but with its end.⁶⁵ This latter possibility seems to me more plausible than the first, but my preference goes to a third one – that this region was taken (by Megabazus?) under Persian control prior to the Scythian expedition as an extremely strategic point for keeping Darius’ rear safe while marching northwards. Here again, from a historical point of view more than one possibilities are acceptable;⁶⁶ additional information is needed in order to reconstruct correctly the sequence of the events concerning Doriskos.

What can we say about Megabazus’ conquest westwards? Along the Thracian Aegean coast he obviously reached the Paeonian territory in the lower Strymon valley.⁶⁷ The latter was reported explicitly by Herodotus as the homeland of the two Paeonian brothers, who arranged the “theater” with their sister for Darius in Sardis (Hdt. V.12–13) thus causing the deportation of their fellow-tribesmen.⁶⁸ When we connect this information with Herodotus’ report about the temporary establishment of Histiaeus at the lower Strymon after receiving Edonian Myrkinos as a present from king Darius I, an important but so far neglected issue emerges here. It refers to the chronology, as correctly pointed by Petar Delev: “As the Persian king could not have had even pretended rights over the area before the expedition of Megabazus, this might be taken as an indication that the ‘present’ was given after the first successes of the latter; this reverses the order of events as told by Herodotus.”⁶⁹ In my opinion the observation is correct and of a high value, as it contributes to the clarifying of the sequence of the historical events.⁷⁰ Even more important is the fact that it points at a third case in connection with Megabazus’ activity in Thrace in which the Greek historian seems to report the chronology in a reverse order.⁷¹

64 Venedikov 1970.

65 Balcer 1988, 14.

66 According to Archibald (1998, 87) “Doriskos was apparently founded prior to Dareios’ expedition against the Skythians”. However Fol, Hammond (1988, 239) state that after crossing to Hebrus’ western bank Darius “sent a detachment south to garrison its (Thracian – D.B.) Aegean terminal Doriscus.”

67 See Picard 2000, 240 and 249–252 with an important viewpoint.

68 Fol, Hammond 1988, 245; Archibald 1998, 86; Delev 2000, 51–52. Some interesting aspects of the Paeonian deportation are discussed by Asheri 1990, 157–160 and Izdimirski 2002.

69 Delev 2007, 111, note 1.

70 See however Archibald 1998, 85: “... Histiaios’ attempt to found a colony at Myrkinos ... was an independent venture, albeit initiated with Persian approval.” On the Edonian king Getas and his possible relations with Persia see Tacheva 1998.

71 See here above.

It is unclear how far inland Megabazus managed to penetrate in Thrace. His presence in the interior is recorded only for a region where Paeonians were living (Hdt. V.15.2) which has been identified differently: from the gorge between Chaldag and Bozdag to the south⁷² up to the Rupel defile in the north.⁷³ In my opinion, during the initial stage of Megabazus' campaign westwards we should expect to find the Persian general relatively close to the North Aegean coast. It seems further reasonable to suspect that after securing the hold of the coast, he had arranged the relations, by force or in a diplomatic way, with the neighbours in the inland territories.⁷⁴ We do know for certain, however, that "those living around Mt Pangaion, and the Doberes, the Agrianes, the Odomantoi as well as the inhabitants of the pile dwellings in lake Prasias itself were not at all subjugated by Megabazus" (Hdt. V.16.1). Herodotus' reference to these three tribes was excised by Stein and bracketed by Hude but nowadays the historians reinstate it,⁷⁵ although interpreting it differently.⁷⁶ Herodotus' information concerning the tribes around Mt Pangaion could be of high importance later when we try to understand one particular point in his report on Xerxes' itinerary through Thrace.

72 Two southern possibilities are proposed by Delev 2000, 52: "Two variants seem possible: ... Megabazus would have surrounded Mt. Pangaeum, going inland from Neapolis through the plain of Drama and then pushing west through the valley of the Angites. From a purely military standpoint, the second possibility seems preferable ... Megabazus could have passed only up the Nestos valley and then through the gorge between Chaldag and Bozdag used nowadays by the railroad between Drama and Xanthi, thus entering the plain of Drama from the northeast and then continuing along the Angites to the Strymon..."

73 Archibald (1998, 85) also discusses two possibilities: "Hammond thinks he (Megabazus – D.B.) penetrated the Rupel defile but failed to hold it, whilst retaining some power over the Rila and Pirin massifs. The Persians may have sought the submission of tribes in the middle and upper Strymon because of the strategic importance of the Rupel defile, but there is no evidence that his troops got beyond it."

74 In my opinion it was at this moment that the relations between the Achaemenid Empire and the Odrysian kingdom (see here above footnotes 29–30) were arranged. Most probably it happened, similar to Macedonia of Amyntas (Hdt. V.17.1), by sending a Persian embassy who asked and possibly received "earth and water". I incline to date the reign of the Odrysian king Teres synchronously with that of Amyntas of Macedon. The reason for such an early dating I see in the fact that Thucydides has to differentiate him strictly from the mythical Tereus (Thuc. II.29). This could not happen if Teres' reign was situated in a relatively near past and the traditionally accepted dating ca. 480 BC in Thucydides' perspective is such a near past. Doubtless it means that Teres' lifetime must be searched in a much earlier period – ca. 500 BC and earlier could work in this case (for an opposite opinion see Stronk 1998–1999, 69, note 23) – than traditionally accepted in the historiography (Danov 1976, 282–283 with note 1 followed by Peter 1997, 62 with lit.; Archibald 1998, 102; Stronk 1998–1999, 69 f.). The earlier dating of Teres' reign has been proposed already by Fol 1972, 139 (English summary 214) and by Tacheva (2000; 2006, 22–28) with different reasonings and different historical reconstructions.

75 Archibald 1998, 85, note 35; Fol, Hammond 1988, 254; Delev 2000, 51; Delev 2007, 112–113.

76 According to Fol, Hammond 1988, 245 "these lived mainly in the Strymon valley above the Rupel pass." Delev 2000, 51 states that "the Agrianes (mentioned in the passage – D.B.) are evidently different from the well-known tribe of the upper Strymon valley; a statement in Strabo confirms that there was a homonymic Paeonian tribe in the area of Mt Pangaeum (Strabo VII, fr. 41), but there are no explicit data as to its exact localization." See also Delev 2007, 112–113: "The situation is ambiguous and implies at least several distinct possibilities: that there were two distinct groups of Agrianes, one in the vicinity of Mt Pangaion and the other on the Upper Strymon; or that both groups were split parts of the same tribe, possibly in connection with seasonal transhumance; or that sometime between the late 6th and the mid 5th c. the Agrianes migrated from the Pangaion to the Upper Strymon."

King Xerxes and his generals campaigning in Thrace

Some further issues deserve special attention when advocating a re-reading of Herodotus' account on the Persian campaigns in Thrace.

The uncertainty how far inland Megabazus managed to push his way in the Thracian territories putting them under Persian control appears in connection with Xerxes' campaign as well. This situation comes as a logical result of an obvious controversy in Herodotus' account on the route taken by the Persian king when he campaigned against Greece. On the one hand we find him advancing together with his enormous army westwards along the Thracian Aegean coast (Hdt. VII. 108. 2–109. 2). On the other, Herodotus states that between Doriskos and Akanthos the infantry of the Persian army marched westwards divided by Xerxes into three bodies (*moirai*), the first of them being ordered to follow the coast "along with the fleet", the second one was ordered to go on "the inland road" and the third body with the king himself went in between the two (Hdt. VII.121.2–3). Logically enough, the modern historians differ considerably when reconstructing Xerxes' route through Thrace and estimating Herodotus' account on it.⁷⁷ Thus, according to David Asheri a combined operation of the three bodies is "topographically feasible only on certain tracts of the route", and he accepts Dietram Müller's conclusion that "Herodotus' account of the Persian army advancing in three bodies is somewhat schematic."⁷⁸ Wido Sieberer thinks that the advance of Xerxes' army in three parallel columns "ist wegen der Beschaffenheit des Geländes unmöglich."⁷⁹ On her turn, Z. Archibald asserts that "the progress of Xerxes' battalions is described in graphic terms and their movements closely followed" giving further way to the supposition that "Dareios' (*sic*, obviously she means Xerxes' – D.B.) troops did divide into two or three columns west of Neapolis."⁸⁰

Due to the landscape, in my opinion, the picture of Xerxes' advancing westwards with the enormous army⁸¹ as presented in Hdt. VII.108–109.2 is practically impossible.⁸²

I see an acceptable possibility to understand Herodotus' report without accusing him of not being reliable enough concerning the problem here under scrutiny, if we regard the two different routes as going back to two different sources.⁸³ In Hdt. VII.108–109.2 the histo-

77 For a detailed discussion of the controversial elements in Herodotus' report of Xerxes' march through Thrace see Kienast 1996, 303–313 and Tuplin 2003, 390–407. Recently a new reading of Hdt. VII.108–109 has been proposed – see Loukopolou, Psoma 2008.

78 Asheri 1990, 133. See Müller 1987, 36.

79 Sieberer 1995, 69.

80 Archibald 1998, 88.

81 Xerxes' army was beyond doubt very numerous, though certainly not as big as stated by Herodotus. Christopher Tuplin estimates its number to be 200,000 (Tuplin 1997 – *non vidi*, quoted after Ivanchik 2000, 197). Jan P. Stronk also speaks of about 200,000 men crossing the bridge over the Hellespont. Further, he repeats Hignett's remark (1963, 351 – *non vidi*) that according to an Oxford scholar all Persian figures were multiplied by ten due to misinterpretation. "If this theory is applied to Herodotus' figures for Xerxes' army this would give 170,000 infantry and 8,000 cavalry, excluding of course, the camp-followers." (Stronk 1998–1999, 65 with note 14). According to Bichler (2000, 333) and Rollinger (2003, 272) "the huge numbers quoted by Herodotus were of a poetic and legendary kind and have no historical validity."

82 The opposite opinion is shared by Tuplin 2003, 392): "there is nothing about the general lie of land (contours, lateral space and so forth) along these routes which distinguishes them clearly and damagingly from the others..."

83 On Herodotus' purveying of "both oral tradition and part-oral, part-written traditions" see Schepens 2006, 83 with note 9.

rian obviously follows Hekataios' description of the Thracian Aegean coast,⁸⁴ but he also re-tells the information which he had heard from the Greeks living on this coast,⁸⁵ based mainly on memories and oral tradition.⁸⁶ No doubt, the picture created after such a source is expected to be fragmentary and not trustworthy enough.

On the other hand, the evidence reported in Hdt. VII.121.2–3 gives the impression of a documentary record coming from a Persian source.⁸⁷ The reliability of this information becomes even higher when we compare the six names of the Persian generals, reported to be ahead of the land-forces, marching against Greece (Hdt. VII.82) with these appearing as commanders of the three columns of the divided Xerxes' army (Hdt. VII.121.2–3).

In Hdt. VII.82 the six names are given in the following order: Mardonius, Tritantaichmes, Smerdomenes (the last two of them being sons of Darius' brothers and respectively Xerxes' cousins), Masistes, Gergis, Megabyzos. In Hdt. VII.121.2–3 we find Mardonius and Masistes commanding the first column, Tritantaichmes and Gergis – commanding the second, while Smerdomenes and Megabyzos – the third one. There is an obvious system followed by Herodotus (or by his source) when reporting the six names, divided actually in two groups. The first group includes the three names that precede the statement about Darius' nephews, his brothers' sons. It should be stressed that actually all the three of them (not only the last two!) were Darius' nephews, because Mardonius was a son of Darius' sister (Hdt. VII.5.1). Obviously these three generals were expected to have higher posts. The second group includes the other three names of generals that appear only after the statement concerning the two sons of Darius' brothers.

It is hardly by chance that we meet the first name of the first group together with the first name of the second group as generals of the first column, the second name of the first group together with the second name of the second group as generals of the second column and the third name of the first group together with the third name of the second group as generals of the third column. One might conclude that in these two passages Herodotus follows strictly a Persian source giving information about six Persian military commanders, on two different types of posts.

However, within Herodotus' account of Xerxes' army one can define three levels of Persian military commanders.⁸⁸ The highest level includes at least three representatives of Xerxes' generation within Hystaspes' descendants: *Tritantaichmes* – son of Hystaspes' son and Darius' brother Artabanos; *Smerdomenes* – son of Hystaspes' son and Darius' brother Otanes; *Mardonius* – son of Hystaspes' daughter and Darius' sister. All the three of them appear as chief commanders of the three *moirai* of the Xerxes' army during its march

84 See Zahrnt 2008. I am obliged to Prof. Zahrnt for reminding me here of this fact.

85 Tuplin (2003, 388) is "convinced that this part of his (Herodotus' – D.B.) narrative is in part informed by use of his equivalent of maps". For a different opinion see Hammond 1988, 537: "Herodotus ... having no maps..."

86 Such in my opinion is the information about the drinking of rivers and lakes dry – Hdt. VII.108.2–109.1; VII.109.2.

87 On possible Persian sources followed by Herodotus when describing the Xerxes' army see Briant 1990, 112. According to Rollinger (2003, 271) Herodotus' attempt to call many of the commanders by name is noticeable: "Here Herodotus may have referred in part to trustworthy information."

88 On the Achaemenids as highest commanders and the problems one meets when trying to define the hierarchy within the Persian court see Briant 1990, 89–91, 112–113 and Rollinger 2003, 271 with literature.

through Thrace. Within the second level of the Persian military commanders during the expedition against Greece in 480 BC we find *Masistes*, who was not only Xerxes' brother – both of them born by Darius' wife Atossa – but also father of Xerxes' niece and daughter-in-law Artaynte (the wife of Xerxes' son Darius). It is hardly by chance that Masistes appears as a general of one of the bodies of the enormous Xerxes' army, but is mentioned only after the first three “top” military commanders. The third level includes generals, who were commanding each of the different ethnic groups. Among them we find almost all (with one sole exception)⁸⁹ Xerxes' brothers and half brothers, i.e. almost all male representatives of Xerxes' generation within the descendants of Darius I.

During the expedition through Thrace in 480 BC Mardonius and Masistes marched with their part (*moira*) of the army along the coast together with the fleet, thus giving food for the colourful and lasting memories of the coastal population. Herodotus states explicitly that Xerxes himself traveled with the *moira* which marched in the middle and from a military point of view this is the expected place for the chief commander. We know of one fixed point of the Great king's itinerary through Thrace. It is reported only later, when Xerxes was returning home and discovered that the sacred chariot of Zeus which he had left for safe-keeping with the Paeonians of Siris had been given to (or taken by) the Thracians (Hdt. VIII.115). Siris is usually identified with modern Serres.⁹⁰ Inevitable questions come to one's mind, some of them already discussed and answered differently by the modern historians.⁹¹ Why did Xerxes leave the sacred chariot of Zeus for safe-keeping exactly to the Paeonians of Siris? Were these Paeonians identical with the Siropaeonians? We know that among the Paeonian tribes deported by Megabazus into Asia there were also Siropaeonians (Hdt. V.15.3). Accordingly, the question arises: how could Xerxes expect that the Paeonians of Siris would really keep safe the chariot he left with them? Does it mean that Siropaeonians left Asia not against the Great king's will but with his agreement?⁹² Does it further mean that up to the Strymon valley Xerxes was moving within a safe territory, while he felt some uncertainty for the region to the west of this river? I agree with Dietmar Kienast's positive answer.⁹³ Such is at least the impression left also by the sacrifice of white horses and the burial alive of nine youths and girls at Ennea Hodoi (Hdt. VII.113. 2–114.1).⁹⁴ If Siris/Serres is a pinpointed stop during Xerxes' itinerary⁹⁵ through Thrace then I incline to suppose that the middle column of the Persian army in 480 BC followed a route

89 This is Masistes, whom I have just discussed.

90 Tuplin 2003, 389; Delev 2007, 112, note 7 with lit.

91 See Kienast 1996, 306–313 and some disagreements by Tuplin 2003, 400–407.

92 Another possibility is proposed by Kienast (1996, 307).

93 Kienast 1996, 308–309. Concerning Megabazus' campaign westwards Picard states: “Il semble que l'armée n'ait pas dépassé le Strymon. Nous n'avons aucune indication d'une intervention quell-conque en Chalcidique.” According to him “Mardonios ajoute aux possessions perses la Macédoine et, selon toute apparence, la Chalcidique” (Picard 2000, 240–241).

94 Concerning these sacrifices Kienast 1996, 306 speaks of “eine neue Etappe des Marsches” beginning after the crossing of the Strymon.

95 See however Tuplin 2003, 400: “But we probably do not have to postulate a personal visit – at least if we assume that Siris was so much the principal place of the valley that it was a natural place to send valuables for storage and especially if at least part of the army did go there” and Kienast 1996, 307: “Es könnte aber sehr wohl sein, dass eine Gruppe des persischen Heeres mit dem Wagen des Zeus von Neapolis aus über Drabeskos nach Siris gezogen ist und den Wagen dort gelassen hat”.

which coincided more or less with the modern road Komotini – Xanthi – Drama – Serres.⁹⁶ From Siris Xerxes, but not his *moira*,⁹⁷ might have turned southwards and reached Ennea Hodoi.⁹⁸

Two other generals, Tritantaimnes and Gergis, marched through Thrace along the “inland road” ahead of their column of the army. What we are supposed to understand by “inland” and if it includes the Hebros valley with the central plain of Thrace,⁹⁹ is impossible so far to say with certainty because of the lack of needed evidence. However, I incline to accept such an idea though I am not inclined to speak definitely about a conquest of the region. It is also possible that the relations between the Persian army led by Tritantaimnes and Gergis and the local Thracian population in the Hebros valley – the Odrysians above all¹⁰⁰ – were settled with an agreement.¹⁰¹

Closely connected with this issue is, in my opinion, the information encountered in Hdt. VII. 111. The main problem refers to the famous Thracian oracular shrine of Dionysos

96 Compare Livy’s description of the ‘Old Royal Road’- evidently that of Xerxes (Hammond 1988, 538): “it approaches the Paroreia of Thrace and never deviates to the sea” (Livy XXXIX. 27. 10; see also Kienast 1996, 311).

97 Compare Kienast 1996, 311.

98 Such reconstruction of Xerxes’ route does not accord with Herodotus’ statement that the king left to his right side the Mt Pangaion (Hdt. VII.112) but it could be explained through the supposition that “Herodotus described the route of Xerxes from the viewpoint of his own visit to Thasos and perhaps Eion” (Hammond 1988, 538).

99 See Tuplin 2003, 390 with a list of the historians who incline to think in this direction; among them is Hammond 1988, 538–359. Tuplin himself is skeptical. Kienast 1996, 303, note 77 defines this idea as “die phantastische Vorstellung von N. G. L. Hammond.”

100 Here, when speaking about the Odrysians, I mean their king Sparadokos, who was, it seems so, a contemporary of both Xerxes and Alexander I of Macedon (Tacheva 1992 and Anochin 1998, 41–42). Archibald (1998, 106 with note 59) follows the historians who define Sparadokos not as a figure of the central authority, i.e. not as a king, but as a prince. On the discussion concerning Sparadokos’ status and dating see Youroukova 1976, 8–12 and Peter 1997, 64–75 with lit. For my reasoning of the early dating of Teres and respectively Sparadokos see here above footnote 74 with lit. Diodorus’ evidence on Sitalkes (Diod. XII,50,1) creates the impression of a long and very successful reign and a possible proof could be found in the fact that in 431 Sitalkes’ son Sadokos received an Athenian citizenship (Thuc. II.29); accordingly, he must have been at least 20 years old at that time. This dates the marriage of Sitalkes to his Abderian bride to 452/451 BC at the latest (Boteva-Boyanova 2000, 55–63 with an English summary 163). Because of these observations, despite Peter (1998, 66) I do agree with the earlier dating of Sparadokos’ coins. Instead of 445–435 BC, Tacheva dates them to the period ca. 465/4 – 444 BC (Tacheva 1992, 72–73; Tacheva 2006, 24) and most recently Psoma (2001, 254) – within the years 460/440, while Anochin (1998, 42) placed them in the period “ca. 470–450 BC.” However I do prefer to point at their possible relative chronology as nearly synchronous with at least part of Alexander’s issues and not to give exact years as there is still a lot of uncertainty in the dating of the latter’s coinage (Tacheva 1992, 59–63; for an interpretation of their iconography see Greenwald 1997).

101 Stronk (1998–1999, 68) states that “Persians evidently (...) found the Odrysians useful allies, to the benefit of both parties”. Further we read about “the military strength of the Odrysians and their level of organization (both with courtesy to Mardonius and Megabazus)” (Stronk 1998–1999, 70). According to Archibald (1998, 85) the “Persian silverware at Duvanli, which includes a magnificent amphora-rhyton, one of the finest examples of Achaemenid ‘Court Style’ toreutics, suggests rather that Dareios pursued more diplomatic channels, making the leading circles in these regions allies whose co-operation might be relied on. These are not the kinds of objects which one would find in the tombs of defeated subjects.”

possessed by the Bessi. In the current literature this oracle is generally searched for in the Rhodope Mountain¹⁰² because Herodotus' information about it appears at a point where Xerxes' march to the south of this mountain is reported (Hdt. VII.109–112). However, there is not a single ancient author who connects the Thracian oracular shrine of Dionysos with the Rhodope Mountain. Very eloquent is the *scholion* on Euripides' "Hekabe" 1267,¹⁰³ where two opinions for the localization of this oracle (Pangaion and, unexpectedly, Haimos) are given and the Rhodope Mountain is not among them. Haimos appears as the home of a Dionysos' shrine in Thrace in the *scholion* on Euripides' "Alkestis" 968 as well.¹⁰⁴ The same mountain is connected with Dionysos also by Diodorus (IV.82.5–6). An analysis of the combined sources gave me grounds to seek for an alternative localization of the oracle reported by Herodotus, situating it in the Haimos range.¹⁰⁵

At first sight such a localization sounds striking because the Satrai are connected in Hdt. VII.112–113 with Mt Pangaion. But if we re-read Herodotus' text carefully this statement turns to be very problematic. As already pointed out,¹⁰⁶ in Hdt. V.16.1 we find the Doberes, the Agrianes and the Odomantoi next to those living around this mountain, and any reference to the Satrai is missing here. On the other hand, in the passage concerning the oracle Herodotus explains that the Satrai "have never yet been conquered by any one, but continue to this day as free and unconquered people, unlike the other Thracians. They dwell amid lofty mountains clothed with forests of different trees and capped with snow, and are very valiant in fight." (Hdt VII.111).¹⁰⁷ This description creates an impression of remote and less known Thracian regions; doubtless, the Rhodope Mountain does not fit here. Now, after the sensational excavations of the settlement in inner Thrace, accepted to be the emporion Pistiros,¹⁰⁸ it became clear that in the 5th century BC some Greeks (most of them probably merchants) had already reached this inner part of Thrace. Accordingly, there is no obstacle that information about this oracle, situated as I am stating in the Haimos Range, could have reached the Greek world and could have entered the lines of Herodotus' logos.

Still, there is a problem as it is not clear why this information appears exactly within the report on Xerxes' march through Thrace – is it by a pure chance or because the Persian army reached the region, famous for the oracle? Both answers are possible but if we choose the second one we would have evidence which accords with Justin's information that the friendship of Xerxes and Alexander resulted in his giving to Alexander the rule over 'the whole region between the mountains Olympus and Haemus' at the time when 'a storm of trouble swooped down on Greece' (VII.4.1).¹⁰⁹

102 Archibald 1998, 110; Spiridonov 1977, 227. Perdrizet's attempt to connect this oracle with Mt Pangaion (Perdrizet 1910, 42–43) does not find further acceptance.

103 Schwartz 1887, 89.

104 Schwartz 1891, 239.

105 Boteva 1997; Boteva 1999, 187–188; Boteva 2002, 28.

106 See here above.

107 English translation by George Rawlinson.

108 On Pistiros see Velkov, Domaradzka 1994; Domaradzka, Domaradzki 1999 and most recently Tacheva 2007 with lit. It is situated on the south slope of the Sredna Gora Range (highest peak 1604m), which runs closely and parallel southwards to the Haimos Range (highest peak 2376m).

109 Justin's statement is referred to and discussed by Hammond 1988, 539.

To conclude: re-reading Herodotus' account of the Persian campaigns in Thrace proves once again the "polyphonic" character of his evidence. In his "Histories" we can hear the voice of someone born in Halikarnassos in Asia Minor, where Karians and Dorians were living side by side within the Persian Empire; but also of someone who chose to live in Ionian Samos at a time when the island was already famous for the Pythagorean school; clearly recognizable is also the voice of the "wandering inquirer",¹¹⁰ who might had traveled not much,¹¹¹ but still enough in order to come in personal contact with different states – the Achaemenid Empire being among them – and various cultures and cultural traditions – including the Thracian one; further we have not to forget the voice of the Greek, who came to Athens during the city's most glorious 50 years and entered into Perikles' circle but not without hearing what the Greek colonists from Pontus, Hellespont and Thracian Aegean coast were ready to share with him; and last, but not least – the voice of an *oikistes* himself, who went to South Italy and established there the new colony of Thurioi, being able later to come back to Athens still gathering the needed information for his "Histories".¹¹² Accordingly, it is easy to blame Herodotus for not giving correct information, but actually trying to understand Herodotus is doubtless a complicated task,¹¹³ because one has first to find out which voice is speaking in each text, and second – to be able to understand the respective "language". Obviously, this is a steep and endless itinerary. The essay presented here is just one of the "many quite distinct possibilities anyone ... has to choose from"¹¹⁴ when re-reading the monumental "Histories".

Abbreviations

CAD = Chicago Assyrian Dictionary (Gelb, Jacobsen et al. 1956)

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110 Asheri 1990, 133.

111 See here above footnote 2.

112 The information provided in Hdt. VII. 59.1 refers to events doubtless dated to 430 BC.

113 For a possible approach see Bichler 2000; Bichler, Rollinger 2000.

114 Tuplin 2003, 392.

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**ANCIENT MACEDONIA
VII**

**MACEDONIA
FROM THE IRON AGE
TO THE DEATH OF PHILIP II**

**PAPERS READ
AT THE SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
HELD IN THESSALONIKI, OCTOBER 14-18, 2002**

THE BEEHIVE TOMBS IN THRACE AND THEIR CONNECTION WITH
FUNERARY MONUMENTS IN THESSALY, MACEDONIA
AND OTHER PARTS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD*

Nikola Theodossiev

The origins of the Thracian beehive tombs constructed under tumuli have still not been decided on even after long and intense debates between scholars that have begun since the famous tombs at Mezek (Fig. 1), dated to the second half of the 4th century B.C.¹, were discovered in the 1930s. A hypothesis that is accepted is that Mycenaean funerary traditions survived in the Northern Balkans and were later revived by the Thracian tribes, while other scholars have tried to find predecessors of the tholos tombs among the Early Iron Age (11th-6th centuries B.C.) primitive rock-cut tombs (with circular or oval burial chambers) discovered in Southeastern Thrace².

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1. The most comprehensive publication of the beehive tombs still remains B. Filov, "Kupolnite grobnitsi pri Mezek", *BIABulg* 11 (1937) 1-116, although some different dates for part of the finds were proposed in later studies. In his article Filov discussed the problems of origin of the tholos tombs and he published two other brief papers on this discovery: B. Filov, "The Bee-hive Tombs of Mezek", *Antiquity* 11/43 (1937) 300-305 and "Thrakisch-mykenische Beziehungen", *Revue Internationale des Etudes Balkaniques* 3/5-6 (1937-1938) 1-7. On Mal Tepe tomb see also another report: J. Welkow, "Grabfund von Maltepe", *AA* (1931) 418-422. Later on, V. Mikov studied the problems of origin of the tholos tombs in his articles "Proizhod na nadgrobnite mogili v Bulgaria", *Godishnik na Narodniya Arheologicheski Muzei* 7 (1942) 16-31 and "Proizhod na kupolnite grobnitsi v Trakiya", *BIABulg* 19 [= *Serta Kazaroviana* 2/ (1955) 15-48. Cf. two other important discussions of origin: A. M. Mansel, *Die Kuppelgräber von Kirklareli in Thrakien*, Ankara 1943, passim; K. Bittel, *Kleinasiatische Studien* (= *IstMitt* 5) Istanbul 1942, 92-95.

2. Good summaries of various opinions and some own interpretations on the origin are given in: L. Ognenova, "Survivances de la civilisation méditerranéenne du IIe millénaire en Thrace, vers la seconde moitié du Ier millénaire" in: *Acta Antiqua Philippopolitana. Studia Archaeologica*, Serdicae 1963, 27-34; A. M. Mansel, "Gebze yöresinde Kutluca kubbeli mezari ve onun Trakya kubbeli mezarları arasında aldığı yer", *Belleten* 37/146 (1973) 143-158; R. A. Tomlinson, "Thracian and

A comprehensive study in a broader comparative context could present us with more options. There is no doubt that the various rectangular and domed tombs of ancient Thrace were closely related to the Late Archaic, Classical and Early Hellenistic Greek and Anatolian funerary monuments and were strongly influenced by this architecture³. A number of diverse tholos tombs from the Dark Age and the Archaic Period, which have been discovered in different parts of Greece and Asia Minor⁴, could also be considered predecessors. Thus, it is clear that the appearance of the Thracian beehive tombs in the early 4th century B.C., the date accepted by most scholars, was a complex process influenced by various and numerous sources.

Of course, possible connections with the famous Mycenaean tholos tombs

Macedonian Tombs Compared", *Thracia* 3 (1974) 247-250; I. Venedikov, "L'origine des tombeaux à coupole", *Thracia* 3 (1974) 203-205; I. Venedikov, "Mogilnite grobnitsi v Trakiya" in: *Megalitite v Trakiya. Trakiiski Pametnitsi* 1, Sofia 1976, 115-123; I. Venedikov, "Skalnite grobnitsi v Trakiya i mikenskite grobnitsi" in: *Megalitite v Trakiya, op.cit.*, 110-115; I. Venedikov, "Trakiiskite dolmeni, dolmenite v Kavkaz i grobnitsite v Mala Aziya" in: *Megalitite v Trakiya, op.cit.*, 76-81; R. F. Hoddinott, *The Thracians*, London 1981, 119-121, 124-126; M. Rousseva, *Thracian Cult Architecture in Bulgaria*, Jambol 2000, passim; M. Rousseva, *Trakiiska grobnichna arhitektura v bulgarskite zemi prez V-III v.pr.n.e.*, Yambol 2002, 13-14, 21-28, 61-68; J. Valeva, "Hellenistic Tombs in Thrace and Macedonia: Their Form and Decorations" in: E. M. Moormann (ed.), *Functional and Spatial Analysis of Wall Painting. Proceedings of the Fifth International Congress on Ancient Wall Painting (= BABesch Supplement 3)*, Leiden 1993, 119-126; J. Valeva, "Trakiiski i makedonski monumentalni grobnitsi", *Problemi na Izkustvoto* 27/3 (1994) 55-62.

3. The most comprehensive discussion in: Z. H. Archibald, *The Odrysian Kingdom of Thrace. Orpheus Unmasked*, Oxford 1998, 282-303; cf. also G. R. Tsetschladze, "Who Built the Scythian and Thracian Royal and Elite Tombs?", *OxfJA* 17/1 (1998) 55-92; S. Steingraber, "Die thrakische Grabmalerei: eigenständige Charakteristiken und Elemente einer hellenistischen Koiné" in: *Thrace and the Aegean. Eight International Congress of Thracology. Summaries*, Sofia - Yambol 2000, 59-61; S. Steingraber, "Gab es eine Koiné in der Mediterranen Grabmalerei der frühhellenistischen Zeit?" in: A. Barbet (ed.), *La peinture funéraire antique IVe siècle av. J.-C. - IVe siècle ap. J.-C. Actes du VIIe Colloque de l'Association Internationale pour la Peinture Murale Antique*, Paris 2001, 201-206; T. Stoyanov, "Groblichnata arhitektura v Severoiztochna Trakiya v svetlinata na kontaktite s Mala Aziya (IV-III v.pr.n.e.)", *Terra Antiqua Balcanica* 4 (1990) 122-133; J. Hatlas, "Der ägäisch-anatolische Kontext der thrakischen sepulkralen Bauwerke (5.-3. Jh.v.Chr.)" in: *The Thracian World at the Crossroads of Civilizations I*, Bucharest 1997, 310-320.

4. An excellent synthesis in: P. Belli, "Tholoi nell'Egeo dal II al I millennio" in: D. Musti – A. Sacconi – L. Rocchetti etc. (eds.), *La transizione dal Miceneo all'alto Arcaismo. Dal palazzo alla città*, Roma 1991, 425-450. Cf. some other publications: J. N. Coldstream, *Geometric Greece*, Cambridge 1977, passim; T. J. Papadopoulos, *Mycenaean Achaea (= SIMA 55/1-2)*, Göteborg 1979, 28-59; I. Pini, *Beiträge zur Minoischen Gräberkunde*, Wiesbaden 1968, 4-107; A. M. Snodgrass, *The Dark Age of Greece*, Edinburgh 1971, 154-212; K. Syriopoulos, *Οι μεταβατικοί χρόνοι από της μυκηναϊκής εις την αρχαϊκήν περίοδον 1200-700 π.Χ.*, Athenai 1983-1984, passim; J. Wiesner, *Grab und Jenseits. Untersuchungen im Ägäischen Raum zur Bronzezeit und Frühen Eisenzeit*, Berlin 1938, passim; Y. Boysal, "New Excavations in Caria", *Anatolia* 11 (1967) 32-56; M. S. F. Hood, "Tholos Tombs of the Aegean", *Antiquity* 34/135 (1960) 166-176.

should be also considered⁵. However, about six hundred years and more separate these two groups of monuments so it is necessary to decide whether the Thracian tholoi are in any way reminiscent of the Late Helladic domed tombs and if so what could explain similar relationship. Taking in mind the chronological gap, it seems that a possible connection could be related to the Hero Cults in ancient Greece during the 1st millennium B.C., and the fact that many of the Mycenaean tombs were known to the Greeks and were re-used as sites for various cult activities and secondary burials⁶. Moreover, in Roman period Pausanias gave accurate descriptions of certain Mycenaean monumental tombs, so they were obviously visible and accessible and of great interest and significance to the local people⁷. Therefore, it is possible to imagine that during the middle of the 1st millennium B.C. and later some Thracians, who lived in or travelled through Greece⁸, would be acquainted with the monumental Late Helladic domed tombs, which were still visible many centuries after they had been built. Unfortunately, there is no historical evidence testifying that Thracian people visited the Late Helladic tombs in Greece. On the other hand, during the Archaic and Classical periods there were many Greeks living in the colonies alongside the North Aegean and the West Pontic coasts and recent archaeological discoveries clearly show that some Greeks inhabited inland Thrace, too, thus establishing bilateral eco-

5. Comprehensive study and detailed catalogue of the Helladic tholos tombs in: O. Pelon, *Tholoi, tumuli et cercles funéraires. Recherches sur les monuments funéraires de plan circulaire dans l'Égée de l'âge du Bronze (IIIe et IIe millénaires av. J.-C.)*, Paris 1976, passim.

6. In the recent years the connection between Bronze Age tombs and Hero Cults during the 1st millennium B.C. has been widely discussed: S. E. Alcock, "Tomb Cult and Post-Classical Polis", *AJA* 95/3 (1991) 447-467; C. M. Antonaccio, "Contesting the Past: Hero Cult, Tomb Cult, and Epic in Early Greece", *AJA* 98/3 (1994) 389-410; C. M. Antonaccio, *An Archaeology of Ancestors. Tomb Cult and Hero Cult in Early Greece*, Lanham 1995, passim; R. Hägg, "Funerary Ritual, Veneration of Ancestors and the Cult of Heroes in Geometric Greece" in: R. Hägg (ed.), *Ancient Greek Hero Cult* (= *Acta Instituti Atheniensis Regni Sueciae, Series in 8°*, 16), Stockholm 1999, 37; A. Mazarakis Ainian, "Reflections on Hero Cults in Early Iron Age Greece" in: Hägg (ed.), *op.cit.*, 9-36. Cf. another aspects of Hero Cults discussed by J. Whitley, "The Monuments That Stood before Marathon: Tomb Cult and Hero Cult in Archaic Attica", *AJA* 98/2 (1994) 213-230 and "Tomb Cult and Hero Cult" in: N. Spencer (ed.), *Time, Tradition and Society in Greek Archaeology*, London - New York 1995, 43-63.

7. Pausanias, II 16, 5-7 on the tombs at Mycenae; IX 36, 4-7 et 38, 2-3 on the "treasury" of Minyas at Orchomene. Cf. G. Ekroth, "Pausanias and the Sacrificial Rituals of Greek Hero-Cults" in: Hägg (ed.), *op.cit.* (n. 6) 145-158 with study on various Hero Cults celebrated at the burial place, as described by Pausanias.

8. Archibald, *op.cit.* (n. 3), passim with information for Thracians like travelers, mercenaries, invaders and slaves in Greece. Cf. also J. G. P. Best, *Thracian Peltasts and their Influence on Greek Warfare*, Groningen 1969, passim.

conomic, social, political and cultural interrelations with the local tribal groups⁹. Presumably, some of these Greek settlers would have carried the knowledge of the Mycenaean domed tombs with them.

It seems however, that a possible relationship between the beehive tombs in Thrace and the Dark Age and Archaic tholos tombs known in many parts of Greece is much more possible when discussing the origins of these Thracian funerary monuments. Similar Greek tombs have been found in Messenia, Achaia, Phokis, Thera, Tenos, Kephallonia and other places, and they usually have very simple construction and consist of a dromos and a circular burial chamber¹⁰. One of the most remarkable and significant groups of Dark Age and Early Archaic domed tombs is located in Crete where such architectural traditions can be traced back to the Early Minoan Age and several of the funerary monuments from that period were used for secondary burials in the 700-800 years that followed¹¹. Thus, these Cretan monuments could be seen as

9. Archibald, *op.cit.* (n. 3), *passim*; Z. H. Archibald, "The Shape of the New Commonwealth: Aspects of the Pontic and Eastern Mediterranean Regions in the Hellenistic Age" in: G. R. Tsetschladze – A. M. Snodgrass (eds.), *Greek Settlements in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea* (= BAR-IS 1062), Oxford 2002, 49-72 with discussion on various relations between Greeks and local tribal groups in Thrace. For the North Aegean region: B. Isaac, *The Greek Settlements in Thrace until the Macedonian Conquest*, Leiden 1986, *passim*. On diverse models of interaction and relationship cf. also J. Boardman, *The Diffusion of Classical Art in Antiquity*, London 1994, *passim*; G. R. Tsetschladze, "Greek Colonisation of the Black Sea Area: Stages, Models, and Native Population" in: G. R. Tsetschladze (ed.), *The Greek Colonisation of the Black Sea Area. Historical Interpretation of Archaeology*, Stuttgart 1998, 9-68; K. Randsborg, "Greek Peripheries and Barbarian Centres: Economic Realities and Cultural Responses" in: P. Bilde – T. Engberg-Pedersen – L. Hannestad – J. Zahle – K. Randsborg (eds.), *Centre and Periphery in the Hellenistic World*, Aarhus 1993, 86-123.

10. For details see the literature given in n. 4 with *op.cit.* Some other publications of different tholos tombs: C. W. Blegen – M. Rawson – W. Taylour – W. Donovan, *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in Western Messenia* 3, Princeton 1973, 236-242; A. Choremis, "Θολωτός τάφος εις Καρποφόρον Μεσσηνίας", *AAA* 1/1 (1968) 205-209; A. Choremis, "Μυκηναϊκοί και Πρωτογεωμετρικοί τάφοι εις Καρποφόρον Μεσσηνίας", *AEphem* 1973, 25-74; H. Dragendorff, (ed.), *Theraeische Graeber* (= *Thera II*), Berlin 1903, 92-103; N. M. Kontoleon, "Ανασκαφή εν Τήνω", *Prakt* 1955, 258-263; N. Kyparissis, "Ανασκαφή Μυκηναϊκού νεκροταφείου εν Αγ. Βασιλείω Χαλανδρίτης Αχαΐας", *Prakt* 1928, 110-119; N. Kyparissis, "Ανασκαφαί Μυκηναϊκών νεκροταφείων της Αχαΐας", *Prakt* 1930, 81-88; L. Lerat, "Tombs submycéniennes et géométriques a Delphes", *BCH* 61 (1937) 44-52; S. Marinatos, "Αι εν Κεφαλληνία ανασκαφαί Goekoop 2", *AEphem* 1933, 68-100; E. Pfuhl, "Der archaische Friedhof am Stadtberge von Thera", *AM* 28 (1903) 1-290.

11. For general study of tholos tombs in Crete see the literature given in n. 4 and also: K. Branigan, *The Tombs of Messara*, London 1970, *passim*; J. K. Brock, *Fortetsa. Early Greek Tombs near Knossos*, Cambridge 1957, *passim*; S. Xanthoudides, *The Vaulted Tombs at Messara*, London 1924, *passim*. A recent discovery of Early Bronze Age tomb in: D. Blackman – K. Branigan, "The Excavation of an Early Minoan Tholos Tomb at Ayia Kyriaki", *BSA* 77 (1982) 1-57. Other publications with more details on Geometric and Early Archaic tholos tombs: S. Alexiou, "Αρχαιότητες και μνημεία κεντρικής και ανατολ. Κρήτης", *ADelt* 22/B'2 (1967) 480-488; H. A. Boyd,

the earliest tholos tombs known in the Eastern Mediterranean and they probably inspired the construction of similar funerary monuments in other regions during the later periods of the Bronze Age. Other groups of Late Bronze Age and Protogeometric tholos tombs were excavated in Caria and the fact that such funerary monuments were constructed in that part of Asia Minor could be seen as evidence of Mycenaean influence¹². This idea is supported by the presence of other monuments such as the beehive tomb at Kolophon¹³. Another intriguing monumental tholos tomb, possibly from the Late Bronze Age, was found at Ishik-Dagh in Paphlagonia. It consists of long dromos, a domed chamber and another rectangular chamber that reminds the layout of some Mycenaean tombs¹⁴. It seems that the tradition of constructing such monuments survived in Asia Minor for centuries as a tholos tomb containing 7th century B.C. material was reported in Miletos¹⁵. Another group of 6th century B.C. burial monuments was excavated at Karavelitepe in Caria. These tombs also have the unusual plan of rectangular enclosures with beehive burial chambers

"Excavations at Kavousi, Crete, in 1900", *AJA* 5 (1901) 125-157; J. N. Coldstream – J. H. Musgrave, "Knossos: an Early Greek Tomb on Lower Gypsades Hill", *BSA* 76 (1981) 141-165; P. Demargne, "Recherches sur le site de l'Anavlochos", *BCH* 55 (1931) 365-407; A. Evans, *The Palace of Minos at Knossos IV/2*, London 1935, 770-777; F. Halbherr, "Cretan Expedition XI. Three Cretan Necropoleis: Report on the Researches at Erganos, Panaghia, and Courtes", *AJA* 5 (1901) 259-293; E. H. Hall, *Excavations in Eastern Crete, Vrokastro* (= *University of Pennsylvania. The Museum Anthropological Publications III/3*), Philadelphia 1914, 123-139; M. Hartley, "Early Greek Vases from Crete", *BSA* 31 (1930-1931) 56-114; D. Levi, "La necropoli di Arkades, b) Tombe costruite ed edifici diversi", *ASAtene* 10-12 (1927-1929) 174-380; H. G. G. Payne, "Early Greek Vases from Knossos", *BSA* 29 (1927-1928) 224-298; H. W. Pendlebury – J. D. S. Pendlebury – M. B. Money-Coutts, "Karphi. A City of Refuge of the Early Iron Age in Crete", *BSA* 38 (1937-1938) 57-145; N. Platon, "Γεωμετρικός τάφος Αγίων Παρασκευών Ηρακλείου", *AEphem* 1945-1947, 47-97; N. Platon, "Η αρχαιολογική κίνησις εν Κρήτη κατά το έτος 1954", *KretChron* 8 (1954) 506-517; N. Platon, "Η αρχαιολογική κίνησις εν Κρήτη κατά το έτος 1958", *KretChron* 12 (1958) 459-483; A. Taramelli, "Cretan Expedition. XII. Notes on the Necropolis of Courtes", *AJA* 5 (1901) 294-301; A. Taramelli, "Cretan Expedition. XX. A Visit to the Grotto of Camares on Mount Ida", *AJA* 5 (1901) 437-451; M. Tsiporoulou, "Τάφοι της πρώιμης εποχής του σιδήρου στην ανατολική Κρήτη" in: *EILAPINI. Τόμος τιμητικός για τον καθηγητή Νικόλαο Πλάτωνα*, Herakleion 1987, 253-269; L. V. J. Watrous, "J. D. S. Pendlebury's Excavations in the Plain of Lasithi. The Iron Age Sites", *BSA* 75 (1980) 269-283; S. A. Xanthoudidis, "Εκ Κρήτης", *AEphem* 1904, 1-56.

12. Boysal, *op.cit.* (n. 4) 32-56.

13. R. A. Bridges, Jr., "The Mycenaean Tholos Tomb at Kolophon", *Hesperia* 43 (1974) 264-266; cf. G. F. Bass, "Mycenaean and Protogeometric Tombs in the Halicarnassus Peninsula", *AJA* 67/4 (1963) 353-361.

14. R. Leonhard, *Paphlagonia. Reisen und Forschungen im nördlichen Kleinasien*, Berlin 1915, 226-231.

15. G. Karo, "Kuppelgrab" in: M. Ebert (ed.), *RLV 7*, Berlin 1926, 191-196. Cf. a group of Archaic rock-cut rectangular and oval tombs at Miletos: E. Forbeck – H. Heres, *Das Löwengrab von Milet* (= 136. *Winckelmannsprogramm der Archäologischen Gesellschaft zu Berlin*), Berlin 1997, passim.

built inside¹⁶. Although the Greek and Anatolian tholos tombs are chronologically nearer to the Thracian monuments, any conclusions about a possible link needs further archaeological evidence. Nevertheless, the historical context make such a link quite plausible because there are many sources describing contact and interaction during the Greek colonization from the 8th century B.C. onwards¹⁷ and the Persian expansion in Aegean Thrace during the late 6th century B.C. when the region became part of the Achaemenid Empire¹⁸.

The most important regions for the present study are Thessaly and ancient Macedonia as these areas are close to the Thracian lands. This means it is easier to trace different multilateral connections with respect to mortuary practices, funerary architecture and particularly the origins of the beehive tombs. A number of Thessalian tholos tombs from the Late Bronze and Geometric periods have been excavated since the beginning of the twentieth century. It is apparent that Thessaly can be seen as a region where the Mycenaean funerary tradition of constructing domed tombs survived into the 1st millennium B.C.¹⁹. Moreover, some of the Late Helladic funerary monuments were re-used like *heroa* in later periods and for example, a tomb near Metropolis was clearly related to the cult of mythical Aiatos celebrated during the late 7th and early 6th centuries B.C.²⁰ Unfortunately, some of the Dark Age tholos tombs in Thessaly have only been mentioned or superficially described, without any illustrations or a plan and thus, the information for their study is very scarce. Similar, insufficiently reported monuments include the tholos tombs at Halos²¹, Chyretiai²², Dimini and Iolkos²³, Melea²⁴ and

16. W. Voigtländer, "Vorläufer des Maussolleion in Halikarnassos", *Acta Universitatis Upsalensis* 17 (1989) /= T. Linders – P. Hellström (eds.), *Architecture and Society in Hecatomnid Caria*, 51-62.

17. For the Greek colonization in Thrace see the literature given in n. 9; J. Boardman, *The Greeks Overseas. Their Early Colonies and Trade*, London 1980, passim with comprehensive study on the Greek colonization.

18. For the Persian expansion in Aegean Thrace: Hoddinott, *op.cit.* (n. 2) 101-102; Archibald, *op.cit.* (n. 3), passim; J. M. Balcer, "Persia Occupied Thrace (Skudra)", *Historia* 37/1 (1988) 1-21. Cf. also J. Boardman, *Persia and the West*, London 2000, passim.

19. Belli, *op.cit.* (n. 4); Snodgrass, *op.cit.* (n. 4); Syriopoulos, *op.cit.* (n. 4).

20. Cf. the literature given in n. 6. On the Mycenaean tholos tomb at Metropolis related to Aiatos: B. G. Intzesiloglou, "The Myth of Aiatos and Polykleia: Its interpretation and Its Approach to Reality" in: *Religion and Rationalism in Ancient Greece. Abstracts*, Rhodes 2001, 22.

21. A. J. B. Wace – M. S. Thompson, "Excavations at Halos", *BSA* 18 (1911-1912) 1-29.

22. A. S. Arvanitopoulos, "Ανασκαφικά έρευναι εν Θεσσαλία και Μακεδονία κατά τα έτη 1913 και 1914", *Prakt* 1914, 149-218.

23. A. S. Arvanitopoulos, "Θεσσαλίας", *AEphem* 1914, 141; N. M. Verdelis, *Ο πρωτογεωμετρικός ρυθμός της Θεσσαλίας*, Εν Αθήναις 1958, 3-4.

24. A. S. Arvanitopoulos, "Ανασκαφαί εν Θεσσαλία", *Prakt* 1906, 123-130; A. S. Arvanito-

Sesklo²⁵. Other tombs at Sesklo however, and also the tholoi at Lestiani and Dranista, have been described in more detail and with few drafts²⁶. The report on the Protogeometric tholos tomb, excavated at Omolion, is even illustrated with a photograph²⁷. Among the most representative Dark Age beehive tombs are those excavated near and within a Bronze Age settlement mound called Magoula (Fig. 2) located at Marmariani and they provided valuable information on the architectural features and grave offerings²⁸. Other very important Dark Age tholos tombs have been discovered during recent excavations in Thessaly and the comprehensive publications throw additional light on the funerary architecture and mortuary practices in the region. Eight domed tombs (Figs. 3, 4, 5, 6) have been excavated in the area of Pherai so far and they make up the most significant group of such monuments in Thessaly²⁹. However, the number of other Dark Age beehive tombs and tholoi recently unearthed at Argyropouli (Fig. 7), Mesorrahi and Krannon (Fig. 8)³⁰ suggests that important discoveries can be expected in the future.

Other funerary monuments from a later period provide more opportunities to look for relationship between the beehive tombs in Thessaly and Thrace. Thus, the two Late Archaic tholos tombs excavated at Pharsalos are significant and they clearly show the lasting tradition of constructing similar monuments in Thessaly. One was badly destroyed but the main architectural features are visible (Fig. 9)³¹. The presence of an Attic black figure amphora from the end of the 6th century B.C. and a synchronous inscribed cinerary urn

poulos, "Ανασκαφαί και έρευναι εν Θεσσαλία κατά το έτος 1910", *Prakt* 1910, 168-264.

25. D. R. Theocharis, 1965: "Ανασκαφαί εν Σέσκλω", *Prakt* 1965, 5-9; D. R. Theocharis, "Σέσκλον", *Ergon* 1965, 1-9; G. Daux, "Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques en Grèce en 1965", *BCH* 90 (1966) 862.

26. A. S. Arvanitopoulos, "Ανασκαφαί και έρευναι εν Θεσσαλία κατά το έτος 1911", *Prakt* 1911, 280-356.

27. D. R. Theocharis, "Αρχαιότητες και μνημεία Θεσσαλίας", *ADelt* 17/2 (1961-1962) 170-179.

28. W. A. Heurtley – T. C. Skeat, "The Tholos Tombs of Marmariane", *BSA* 31 (1930-1931) 1-55.

29. P. Arachoviti, "Θολωτός πρωτογεωμετρικός τάφος στην περιοχή των Φερών" in: *La Thessalie. Quinze années de recherches archéologiques, 1975-1990. Actes du colloque international Lyon, 17-22 avril 1990*, Athènes 1994, B, 125-138; A. Doulgeri-Intzesiloglou, "Περιοχή Βελεστίνου (αρχαίων Φερών)", *ADelt* 51/B' 1 (1996) 342-345.

30. D. R. Theocharis, "Μικραί ανασκαφικά έρευναι", *ADelt* 20/B' 2 (1965) 316-320; A. Tziaphalias, "Ανασκαφικές εργασίες. Νομός Λαρίσης", *ADelt* 36/B' 2 (1981) 255-260; A. Tziaphalias, "Ανασκαφικές εργασίες. Νομός Λαρίσης", *ADelt* 38/B' 1 (1983) 203-211; A. Tziaphalias – A. Zaouri, "Από τη βόρεια περραιβία ως την αρχαία Κραννώνα: νεκροταφεία της πρώιμης εποχής του σιδήρου" in: *Η περιφέρεια του Μυκηναϊκού κόσμου. Α' Διεθνές Διεπιστημονικό Συμπόσιο*, Λαμία 1999, 143-152 with *op.cit.*; G. Touchais, "Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques en Grèce en 1988", *BCH* 113/2 (1989) 638.

31. N. M. Verdelis, "Ανασκαφή Φαρσάλων", *Prakt* 1955, 140-146.

indicate well the date of the tomb. The second beehive tomb (Fig. 10) is in better condition and still shows the details of the funerary structure³². Amazingly, it was built on top of an earlier Mycenaean chamber grave. A fragmentary Attic black figure krater, possibly made by Exekias, and a synchronous Corinthian pyxis indicate that this tholos tomb can be dated to the second half of the 6th or beginning of the 5th century B.C. However, the most of the rest of the pottery found dates from the 4th to the 3rd centuries B.C., which indicates that the monument was used for secondary activities during the Late Classical and Early Hellenistic Age. Perhaps more important than these two beehive tombs is the ashlar-built tholos tomb (Fig. 11) discovered close to Krannon³³. This monument was partially destroyed but, nevertheless, features of its construction are still visible. Red figure pottery fragments dated to ca. 480 B.C. indicate that the tomb was built around the middle of the 5th century B.C., a little earlier than the Thracian masonry-built domed tombs. The tombs at Pharsalos and Krannon could be seen as predecessors of the Thracian beehive tholoi and they certainly show relationship in the funerary architecture of ancient Thessaly and Thrace. Moreover, two Thessalian tombs (dated early and mid 4th century B.C.) with pyramidal burial chambers were excavated at Krannon³⁴ as well as another one (dated end of the 5th or first half of the 4th century B.C.) at Gerakari Agias³⁵. A similar Thracian pyramid-vaulted tomb (dated to the Early Hellenistic Age) was also discovered near Madzharovo³⁶ supporting the hypothesis that there was interaction and relationship between these regions. Moreover, some historical records also provide evidence of

32. N. M. Verdelis, "Ανασκαφικάί έρευναι εν Θεσσαλία", *Prakt* 1951, 129-163; N. M. Verdelis, "Ανασκαφικάί έρευναι εν Θεσσαλία", *Prakt* 1952, 164-204; N. M. Verdelis, "Ανασκαφικάί έρευναι εν Θεσσαλία", *Prakt* 1953, 120-132; N. M. Verdelis, "Ανασκαφή Φαρσάλου", *Prakt* 1954, 153-159. Cf. architectural study in: A. K. Orlandos, *Les matériaux de construction et la technique architecturale des anciens grecs. Seconde partie*, Paris 1968, 211-212 who supposes that the tholos tomb at Pharsalos served as a model for the later beehive tombs in Thrace.

33. D. R. Theocharis, "Θεσσαλία", *ADelt* 16/2 (1960) 167-186; V. Milojcic, "Bericht über die Ausgrabungen und Arbeiten in Thessalien im Herbst 1959", *AA* 1960, 175-178. Cf. also J. Fedak, *Monumental Tombs of the Hellenistic Age: A Study of Selected Tombs from the Pre-Classical to the Early Imperial Era*, Toronto - Buffalo - London 1990, 166 and Archibald, *op. cit.* (n. 3), 301-302. I was able to visit the tombs at Krannon in the company of Prof. William Greenwalt and am very grateful for his responsiveness and support to my study.

34. E. Protonotariou-Deilaki, "Κτιστός πυραμυδοειδής τάφος εκ του νεκροταφείου Κρανώνος", *Thessalika* 3 (1960) 29-46; Theocharis, *op.cit.* (n. 32); Milojcic, *op.cit.* (n. 32); D. C. Kurtz - J. Boardman, *Greek Burial Customs*, London 1971, 277-278.

35. K. I. Gallis, "Αρχαιότητες και μνημεία Θεσσαλίας", *ADelt* 28/B' 2 (1973) 327-339.

36. Preliminary publication in: B. Chaparov, "Madzharovskata grobnitsa", *Muzei i Pametnitsi na Kulturata* 25/4 (1985) 24-28. Cf. Archibald, *op.cit.* (n. 3), 288.

contacts between Thessaly and Thrace³⁷, although further comparative studies of archaeological material are needed to demonstrate more similarities³⁸.

Further north, in the neighbouring areas of Thrace, some other discoveries brought to light important burial monuments. Three Early Iron Age tombs consisting of *dromos* and underground tholos chamber are reported at Pydna in Macedonia³⁹ and they are considered as monuments implying Mycenaean survival, although a relationship with contemporary beehive tombs in Thessaly is also possible. Another group of very interesting primitive circular tombs (Figs. 12, 13) built of roughly cut stones and slabs has been excavated at Konstandia near Pella⁴⁰. The grave offerings clearly indicate that the monuments were built during the Early Iron Age and the Archaic Period. These chamber tombs at Konstandia allow one to suggest that Thessalian influence of constructing funerary monuments spread far north⁴¹. Obviously, the tholos tombs found in Macedonia should be considered like another possible source for origin of the Thracian domed tombs.

Another recent discovery in ancient Macedonia adds further support to such a conclusion. In 1999, a completely destroyed tholos tomb was excavated at Derveni near ancient Lete⁴². The monument is located close to the other Early Hellenistic tombs and monumental graves that provided spectacular and rich *kterismata*⁴³. Although the structure was almost missing, careful research produced a reconstruction of the layout of the tomb, which consists of long *dromos*, rectangular antechamber and tholos burial chamber. A painted *anthe-*

37. Thucydides IV 108, 1 and Xenophon, *Hell.* V 3, 9 for Thessalian soldiers in Thrace; Strabo VII 7, 1 for Thracians living in Thessaly.

38. Cf. Archibald, *op.cit.* (n. 3), 90, 193, 204-205, 301. A recent study even reveals more similarities and interaction: Z. H. Archibald, "Space, Hierarchy, and Community in Archaic and Classical Macedonia, Thessaly, and Thrace" in: R. Brock – S. Hodkinson (eds.), *Alternatives to Athens. Varieties of Political Organization and Community in Ancient Greece*, Oxford 2000, 212-233.

39. M. Besios – M. Pappa, *Πύδνα*, n.p., 11.

40. A. Chrysostomou, "Το νεκροταφείο των τύμβων εποχής σιδήρου στην Κωνσταντία Αλμωπίας", *ΑΕΜΘ* 9 (1995) 155-166; A. Chrysostomou, "Κωνσταντία 1998-2000. Το νεκροταφείο των τύμβων και η ευρύτερη περιοχή", *ΑΕΜΘ* 14 (2000) 505-518. I was able to consult personally Mrs. Anastasia Chrysostomou and would like to thank her for all information and literature.

41. *Ibidem*.

42. Letter by Dr. Katerina Tzanavari of 5th March 2001. I am deeply grateful to Mrs. Tzanavari who arranged my visit to the tomb and gave me information on this fascinating discovery and also provided literature on her excavation at Derveni.

43. P. G. Themelis – I. P. Touratsoglou, *Οι τάφοι του Δεσβενίου*, Athena 1997, *passim*. Recently the investigation was resumed, thus providing important discoveries: K. Tzanavari, "Δεσβένι μια νεκρόπολη της αρχαίας Λητής", *ΑΕΜΘ* 10Α (1996) 461-476; K. Tzanavari, "Ο μακεδονικός τάφος του τύμβου του Δεσβενίου. Επαναπροσδιορισμός της ταυτότητας ενός παλιού ευρήματος" in: *Μύθος. Μνήμη Ιουλίας Βοκοτοπούλου*, Θεσσαλονίκη 2000, 593-617.

mion, now exhibited in the Archaeological museum of Thessaloniki, and some other finds, such as pottery and coins, indicate that the tomb was built in the late 4th or beginning of the 3rd century B.C. This funerary monument is unique for Early Hellenistic Macedonia and clearly testifies to a relationship between Macedonian and Thracian tomb architecture⁴⁴. Actually, the strong relations and interaction are evident in other archaeological material, too, and a great number of historical records provide sufficient evidence of various military and political activities as well as regular contacts between ancient Macedonia and Thrace⁴⁵.

As mentioned above, many architectural features and details clearly indicate that the Thracian beehive tombs were related not only to the mainland Greece, but also to the funerary monuments in Asia Minor and in addition, there are some Anatolian tholos tombs that date to the late 2nd and first half of the 1st millennium B.C. Thus, it is not surprising that a beehive tomb (Fig. 14) consisting of long *dromos* and burial chamber dated to the 4th century B.C. was excavated near Kutlucha in Western Bithynia⁴⁶. The monument is perhaps the best synchronous parallel to the Thracian domed tombs and could be considered as an excellent proof of the cultural interaction and ethnic relationship between ancient Thracians and Bithynians, as is recorded in numerous written sources⁴⁷. Another tholos tomb (Fig. 15), unfortunately badly destroyed, was excavated near Çan in north-west Asia Minor⁴⁸. A painted sarcophagus with hunting and battle scenes in relief indicates that the tomb was built in

44. In details see the literature given in n. 2 and n. 3. The interaction between Macedonia and Thrace is well evident in the barrel-vaulted tombs widespread in both regions from the middle of the 4th century B.C. onwards, but mainly during the Early Hellenistic Age. Besides a great number of articles presenting different monuments and various discussions on the Macedonian barrel-vaulted tombs, there are several publications providing catalogues or lists of the monuments, comprehensive study and excellent synthesis: S. G. Miller, *Hellenistic Macedonian Architecture: Its Style and Painted Ornamentation*, Ann Arbor 1972, passim; S. G. Miller, *The Tomb of Lyson and Kallikles: A Painted Macedonian Tomb*, Mainz am Rhein 1993, passim; D. Pandermalis, "Ο νέος μακεδονικός τάφος της Βεργίνας", *Μακεδονικά* 12 (1972) 147-182; B. Gossel, *Makedonische Kammergräber*, Berlin 1980, passim.

45. Hoddinott, *op.cit.* (n. 2), 104-110, 121-122; Archibald, *op.cit.* (n. 3), passim with *op. cit.*; Archibald, *op.cit.* (n. 38).

46. Mansel, *op.cit.* (n. 2); A. M. Mansel, "1968 Kutluca kazina dair onrapor", *TürkAD* 17/1 (1968) 105-109; A. M. Mansel, "Das Kuppelgrab von Kutluca (West-Bithynien)", *Thracia* 3 (1974) 207-220. Brief reports in: F. K. Dörner, *Inschriften und Denkmäler aus Bithynien* (= *IstForsch* 14). Berlin 1941, 16-21; A. M. Mansel, "Kutluca (Bithynia), 1968", *AnatSt* 19 (1969) 16.

47. D. Detschew, *Die thrakischen Sprachreste*, Wien 1976², 63-65 with the main historical sources and epigraphic records. Cf. A. Fol, "Thrako-bithynische Parallelen im vorrömischen Zeitalter", *Thracia* 1 (1972) 197-212.

48. N. Sevinç – R. Körpe – M. Tombul – C. B. Rose – D. Strahan – H. Kiesewetter – J. Wallrodt, "A New Painted Graeco-Persian Sarcophagus from Çan", *Studia Troica* 11 (2001) 383-420.

the first quarter of the 4th century B.C. There are two other Anatolian monuments that provide examples of large corbelled tholoi: the Lion Tomb at Knidos⁴⁹, dated to the late 4th or early 3rd centuries B.C. (but not excepting an earlier date) and the Ptolemaion at Limyra, dating from the second quarter of the 3rd century B.C.⁵⁰ Both constructions are open-air mausoleums, with remarkable designs and monumental façades, but they can still be related to the tumular beehive tombs in Thrace thus providing evidence of contact and interaction. The same is true for some of the monumental tholoi known in different regions of Greece and Asia Minor, and among these circular temples, the Early Hellenistic *Heroon* (Fig. 16) excavated in the agora of Stymphalos⁵¹ is perhaps the best parallel, since its plan is very similar to some of the Thracian domed tombs, consisting of an entrance, and antechamber and a tholos burial chamber.

However, other Late Classical and Early Hellenistic beehive tombs known in different parts of the ancient world do not seem to be so directly related to the Thracian funerary tholoi, although one can speculate that common architectural models and ideas became widely known to different people living in long distance areas, especially during the Hellenistic Age. Most remarkable for the present study is the Bosporan monumental beehive tomb (Fig. 17) excavated in Zolotoi Kourgan near to Pantikapaion on the Northern Pontic coast⁵².

49. Fedak, *op.cit.* (n. 32), 76-78; A. W. Lawrence, *Greek Architecture. Revised by R. A. Tomlinson*, New Haven - London 1996⁵, 147; P. A. Webb, *Hellenistic Architectural Sculpture. Figural Motifs in Western Anatolia and the Aegean Islands*, Madison 1996, 121. Cf. the first comprehensive publication: C. T. Newton, *A History of Discoveries at Halicarnassus, Cnidus, and Branchidae II/2*, London 1863, 480-511.

50. J. Borchhardt, "Bericht der Grabungskampagne in Limyra 1988", *Kazi Sonuçları Toplantısı* 11/2 (1989) 185-210; J. Borchhardt - G. Stanzl, "Ein hellenistischer Bau des Herrscherkultes: das Ptolemaion in Limyra" in: *Götter, Heroen, Herrscher in Lykien*, Wien - München 1990, 79-84; J. Borchhardt - B. Borchhardt-Birbaumer, "Zum Kult der Heroen, Herrscher und Kaiser in Lykien", *AW* 23/2 (1992) 99-116; G. Stanzl, "Das Sogenannte Ptolemaion in Limyra Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen 1984-89" in: J. Borchhardt - G. Dobesch (eds.), *Akten des II. Internationalen Lykien-Symposiums*, Wien 1993, II, 183-190; Webb, *op.cit.* (n. 48), 125-126.

51. H. Lauter, *Die Architektur des Hellenismus*, Darmstadt 1986, 176-179. A general study of the Greek tholoi: F. Seiler, *Die griechische Tholos*, Mainz am Rhein 1986, *passim*. Cf. another recent discussion on the tholoi: J. R. McCredie - G. Roux - S. M. Shaw - J. Kurtich, *Samothrace: The Rotunda of Arsinoe (= Samothrace 7)*, Princeton 1992, *passim*.

52. Most recently: Tsetskhladze, *op.cit.* (n. 3). On the tombs found in Zolotoi and Tsarskii Kourgans: N. Kondakof - J. Tolstoï - S. Reinach, *Antiquités de la Russie Méridionale*, Paris 1891, 28-30, 109-110; J. Durm, "Die Kuppelgräber von Pantikapaion", *ÖJh* 10 (1907) 230-242; V. D. Blavatskii, "O proishozhdenii bosporskykh sklepov s ustupchatymi perekrytiyami", *SovArch* 24 (1955) 29-53; V. D. Blavatskii, *Pantikapei. Ocherki istorii stolitsy Bospora*, Moskva 1964, 74-83; V. F. Gaidukevich, *Bosporskoe tsarstvo*, Moskva - St. Petersburg 1949, 244-297, 522-529; V. F. Gaidukević, *Das Bosporanische Reich*, Berlin - Amsterdam 1971, 269-273; V. F. Gaidukevich, *Bosporskie*

The exact date of the tomb is debatable, but it is clear that it must be from the 4th or early 3rd centuries B.C. It has been assumed that the huge number of Thracian beehive tombs in the 4th century B.C. inspired the construction of similar monument in the Crimea region, although the tholos shows many features typical of the contemporary Greek architecture, which influenced both ancient Bosphorus and Thrace. Some other relations between Bosporan Kingdom and Thrace⁵³ really do suggest there was possible bilateral communication with respect to the construction of tombs. This, of course, does not discount the obvious Greek influence or the likelihood that Greek architects and masons designed and built many tombs in both regions⁵⁴.

Going further west to Campania, a 3rd or early 2nd century B.C. tholos tomb (Fig. 18a, b) was excavated in the cemetery of ancient Cumae⁵⁵ and is now under restoration. This monument is unique for Hellenistic Italia and is a contemporary parallel to some of the Thracian beehive tombs, although a revival of Minoan and Mycenaean burial traditions has been also assumed⁵⁶. Such similarity in funerary architecture needs further explaining. However, in this particular case eventual relationship with the earlier Etruscan domed tombs from the 7th and 6th centuries B.C. is much more likely than a speculative Thracian connection or presumption for Late Helladic influence⁵⁷.

goroda. Ustupchatye sklepy, ellinisticheskaya usad'ba, ilurat, St. Petersburg 1981, 6-44 with most comprehensive and revised description and detailed study of the tombs. A brief information in: E. A. Savostina, "Les kourganes du Bosphore", *Les Dossiers d'Archéologie* 188 (1993) 58-67. Among the earliest publications cf. K. Neumann, *Die Hellenen im Skythenlande*, Berlin 1855, 492-501.

53. A. J. Graham, "Thasos and the Bosporan Kingdom", *Ancient West & East* 1/1 (2002) 87-101 with study on relationship between ancient Bosphorus and Thrace.

54. Cf. discussion in: Tsetschladze, *op.cit.* (n. 3).

55. G. Pellegrini, "Tombe greche arcaiche e tomba greco-sannitica a tholos della necropoli di Cuma", *MonAnt* 13 (1903) 201-294; G. Karo, "Tombe arcaiche di Cuma", *BPI* 30/1-3 / = Ser. III – T. 10/ (1904) 1-29; A. Maiuri, "Aspetti e problemi dell'archeologia campana", *Historia* 4/1 (1930) 50-82; F. Uliano, *Cuma. Il tempio di Apollo e il dromos. Strutture egeo micenee*, Napoli 1984, 65-67, 86-89.

56. *Ibidem*.

57. Besides a number of publications on Etruscan tholos tombs from Archaic period, there are some comprehensive studies: Å. Åkerström, *Studien über die etruskischen Gräber*, Uppsala 1934, *passim*; M. Demus-Quatember, *Etruskische Grabarchitektur. Typologie und Ursprungsfragen*, Baden-Baden 1958, *passim*; F. Prayon, *Frühetruskische Grab- und Hausarchitektur* (= *RM Suppl.* 22), Heidelberg 1975, *passim*. In the recent years the parallels in the Hellenistic tomb architecture and painting between Italia, Macedonia and Thrace have been studied in details: J. P. Oleson, *The Sources of Innovation in Later Etruscan Tomb Design (ca. 350-100 B.C.)*, Roma 1982, *passim*; M. Torelli, "Macedonia, Epiro e Magna Grecia: La pittura di età classica e protoellenistica", *Magna Grecia, Epiro e Macedonia. AttiTaranto* 24 (1985) 379-398; J. M. Blázquez, "Los rituales funerarios de la tumba tracia de Kazanlak y sus paralelos en Grecia, Etruria, Campania, Lacio, la Peninsula Ibérica y Chipre" in: *Χάρης Διδασκαλίας. Studia in honorem Ludovici Aegidii. Homenaje*

As mentioned above, most of the scholars believe that the earliest Thracian beehive tombs appeared in the beginning of the 4th century B.C., which is true for most of these monuments. However, some funerary structures in Thrace indicate that the construction of monumental tholoi could be traced back to an earlier period. The first one is a tholos (Fig. 19) excavated in the cemetery of Zone (Mesembria), a Greek colony with multiethnic population located in the Samothracian *peraia*⁵⁸. A number of bronze fibulae found in the tomb date the structure to the 8th-7th centuries B.C. Unfortunately, this monument was badly destroyed and although it is possible to ascertain that it was used for burial, evidence of the complete layout, the roofing system, the design of the entrance, and a possible *dromos* has been lost. Nevertheless, the monument at Zone could be seen as the earliest Thracian funerary tholos that testifies to the multilateral relations in the tomb architecture between Aegean Thrace and other regions in Greece, where the Dark Age and Archaic beehive tombs were widespread. Moreover, the location of the monument in an area inhabited by both Greeks and Thracians suggests that the Greek colonists were the people who brought the idea of constructing tholos tombs to some regions of Thrace. Therefore, during the process of contact and interaction, the aristocracy of the local tribal groups took over these ideas and, during the next centuries, masonry-built beehive tombs became the acceptable style for elite funerary monuments in Thrace. Two other circular enclosures discovered in the cemetery of Zone⁵⁹, could be the remains of destroyed tholos tombs. If so, these monuments also support the conclusion above. When talking about the earliest tholos tombs, it is necessary to specify that re-examination of the archaeological data may reveal that domed tombs were built in Thrace throughout the Hellenistic period and even longer. So, some of the monuments presumably come from the Early Imperial Age, although many scholars believe that the last Thracian beehive tombs should be dated to the first half of the 3rd century B.C. and not to later periods.

However, the best example of an early tomb (Fig. 20) from inland Thrace,

a Luis Gil, Madrid 1994, 625-635; S. Steingräber, "Grabarchitektur und Grabmalerei in Thrakien und im vorrömischen Italien - eine vergleichende Studie", *Problemi na Izkustvoto* 32/4 (1999) 53-68; S. Steingräber, *Arpi - Apulien - Makedonien. Studien zum unteritalischen Grabwesen in hellenistischer Zeit*, Mainz 2000, passim; S. Steingräber, "Gab es eine Koinè" (n. 3).

58. A. K. Vavritsas, "Ανασκαφή Μεσημβρίας Θράκης", *Prakt* 1966, 67-70; A. K. Vavritsas, "Ανασκαφή Μεσημβρίας Θράκης", *Prakt* 1967, 89-95; Ts. Tsatsopoulou, "Η ανασκαφική έρευνα στην αρχαία Μεσημβρία κατά το 1990", *AEMΘ* 4 (1990) 587-594; P. Tsatsopoulou-Kaloudi, *Mesembria - Zone*, Athens 2001, 24.

59. Tsatsopoulou, *op.cit.* (n. 58) and Tsatsopoulou-Kaloudi, *op.cit.* (n. 58) with brief information.

built around the middle of the 1st millennium B.C., comes from a tumulus located near Brestovitsa in Rhodope Mountain⁶⁰. Unfortunately, the exact date of the monument is not very clear, since the pottery and a bronze fibula found there have not yet been properly published and this material is only reported as coming from the 6th century B.C. In any case, the early 5th century B.C. should be also considered when discussing chronology of the structure. The construction of the tomb itself is unique among the rest of the Thracian funerary monuments. It has a long *dromos* and a burial chamber with a rectangular and almost square base covered by a beehive dome supported by four pendentives. This technique in the construction of burial chambers is well attested in some Late Minoan and Geometric tombs in Crete like those at Praisos, Moulana, Vrokastro, Panagia and others⁶¹. During the 7th-6th centuries B.C., similar features of burial chamber design were widespread in Etruria as is evident from the tombs at San Cerbone, Del Diavolino and other funerary monuments⁶², contemporary to the Brestovitsa tomb. In a later period, such a burial chamber structure was also found in the Bosporan tomb discovered in Tsarskii Kourgan located close to Pantikapaion, dated to the 4th or early 3rd century B.C.⁶³.

The general classification of the beehive tombs built in Thrace during the 4th and early 3rd centuries B.C. shows that the simplest monuments consist only of tholos chamber or domed burial chamber and *dromos*⁶⁴. Such a single-chamber tholos tomb (Fig. 21) has been excavated near Belovo in Southern Bulgaria⁶⁵. The tomb had been looted and destroyed but can be dated to the 4th century B.C. The structure is pseudo-isodomic and the plan parallels the, later, tholos tomb at Cumae in Campania, while the shape of the chamber: a tholos with a dome possibly constructed like frustum of a cone, can be compa-

60. B. Chaparov, "Trakiiska grobnitsa pri selo Brestovitsa, Plovdivsko" in: *First International Symposium "Seuthopolis". Burial Mounds in South-East Europe. Résumés*, Kazanlak 1993, 86-87; V. Gerassimova – M. Rousseva – K. Kissyov, "Nepublikovani trakiiski pametnitsi ot zemlishtata na selata Brestovitsa i Parvenets, Plovdivsko", *Izvestiya na Muzeite ot Yuzhna Bulgaria* 18 (1992) 63-78; M. Rousseva, "Trakiiska grobnitsa kraj Brestovitsa", *Rodopi* 29/3 (1994) 27-28; Rousseva, *Thracian Cult Architecture* (n. 2), 119-122; Rousseva, *Trakiiska grobnichna arhitektura* (n. 2), 120-121, No. 28; Archibald, *op.cit.* (n. 3), 65, 151-152.

61. Cf. the literature given in n. 4 and n. 11.

62. Cf. the literature given in n. 56.

63. Cf. the literature given in n. 51.

64. Cf. Rousseva, *Thracian Cult Architecture* (n. 2), 50-51 and Rousseva, *Trakiiska grobnichna arhitektura* (n. 2), 52-68.

65. I. Velkov, "Novootkrita kupolna grobnitsa pri s. Malko Belovo", *Godishnik na Narodniya Arheologicheski Muzei* 7 (1942) 37-44. Cf. the literature given in n. 2 and n. 3 for later discussions on the tomb. Especially: Rousseva, *Trakiiska grobnichna arhitektura* (n. 2), 138, No. 40.

red both with the Cumae tholos and the earlier tomb at Krannon in Thessaly. Moreover, the stone sarcophagus, which is located in the chamber of the Belovo monument, resembles the Classical Thessalian pyramid-vaulted and beehive tombs mentioned above, since sarcophagi are typically found in their funerary interior. This parallel, also, suggests bilateral relationships between those involved in funerary architecture and mortuary practices.

Two other tombs consisting of beehive burial chamber and *dromos* have been excavated near Ravnogor in Rhodope Mountain⁶⁶. The masonry of the first tomb (Fig. 22) is quite primitive and, obviously, local Thracians built the monument. Because of the primitive style of construction, the tomb was dated as being from the late 4th or first half of the 3rd century B.C. However, the only material found inside the domed chamber that can be dated exactly comes from the early 1st century A.C. This could indicate that the monument was used for a longer period like a *heroon*, or even that the tomb was built in the Late Hellenistic or Early Imperial Age. In this particular case, the primitive construction may not be the right criterion to date the tomb. The same is true for the second tomb (Fig. 23) excavated at Ravnogor, although materials it contained from the Hellenistic Age suggest an earlier date. In any case, the beehive tombs at Ravnogor both display very simple architectural layouts, which correspond well with the Late Archaic and Classical Thessalian domed tombs at Pharsalos and Krannon. The 4th century B.C. tomb at Kutlucha in Bithynia also has similar plan consisting of beehive chamber and *dromos* leading to periphery of the tumulus.

To sum up, I would like to say that further comparative study of the tomb architecture and painting in the Eastern Mediterranean and particularly in Thessaly, Macedonia and Thrace should reveal more parallels. Such a study will most certainly change our view on the exchange of knowledge and the level of multilateral interactions that took place in these regions, especially during the Late Classical and Early Hellenistic Age.

66. G. Kitov, "Kupolnite grobnitsi pri Ravnogor v Rodopite", *Arheologiya* 31/3 (1989) 28-41; G. Kitov, "The Domed Tombs near the Village of Ravnogor in the Rhodopes", *Talanta* 22-23 (1990-1991) 23-47. Cf. Archibald, *op.cit.* (n. 3), 285-288.

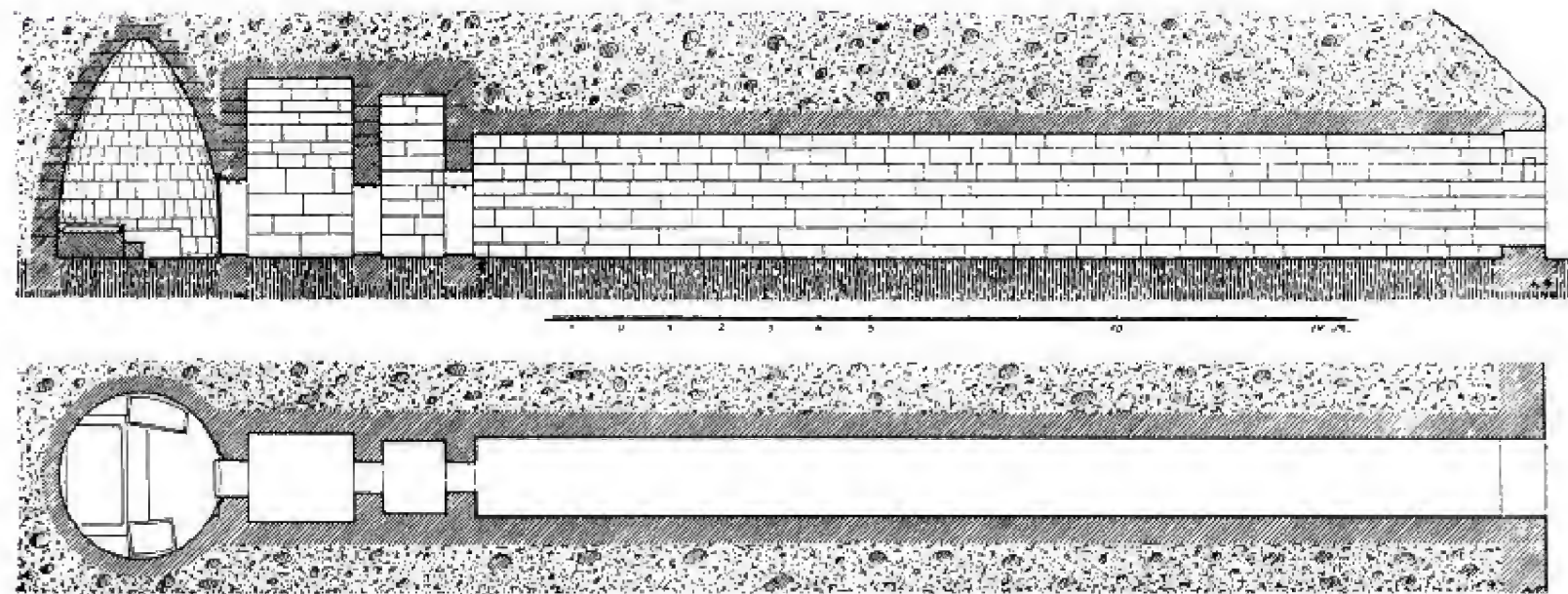


Fig. 1. The Mal Tepe tomb at Mezek (after Filov BIA Bulg 1937).

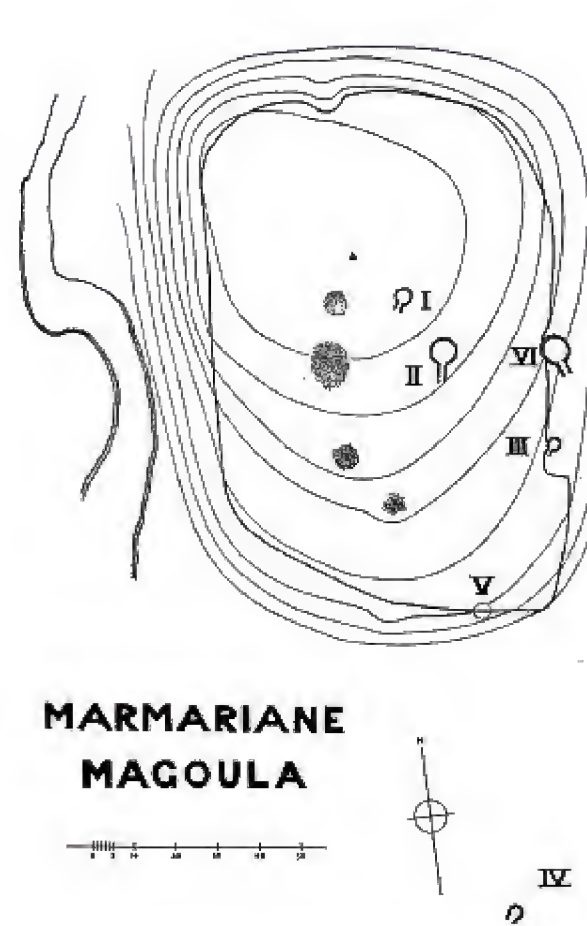


Fig. 2. The Magoula tombs at Marmariani (after Heurtley – Skeat 1930-1931).

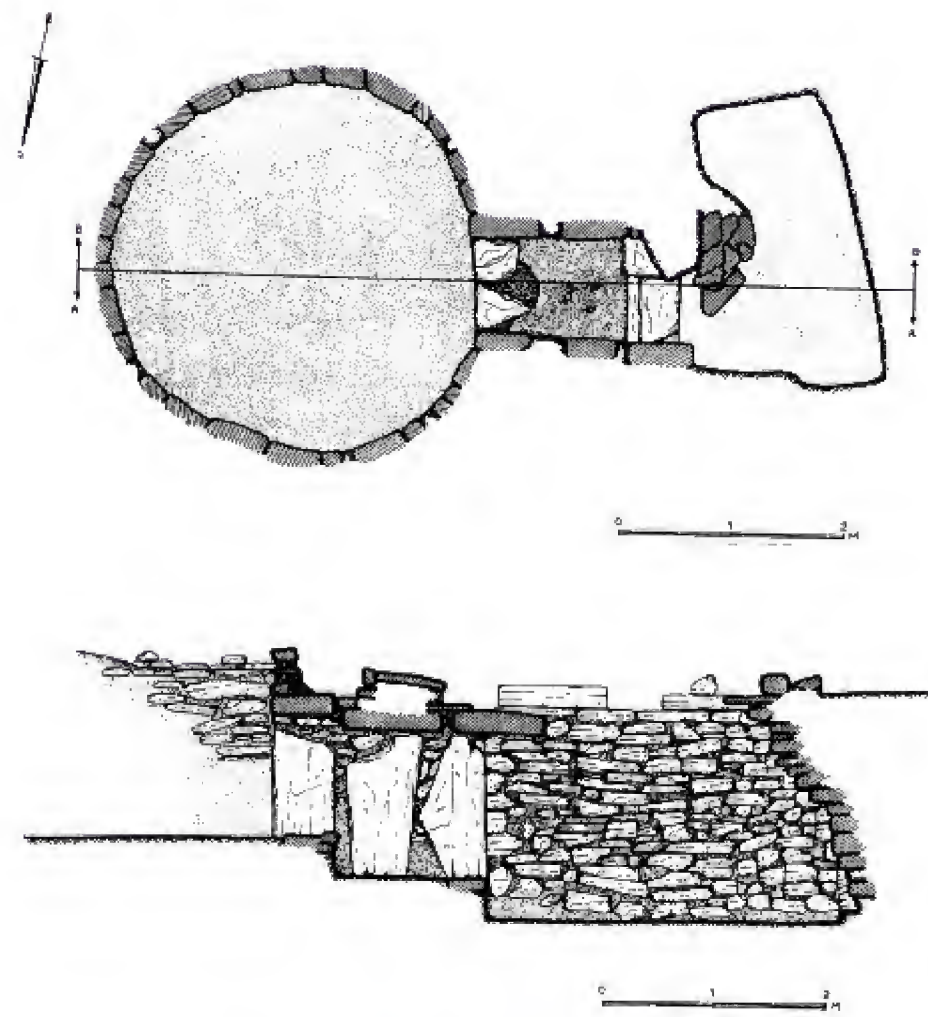


Fig. 3. The tomb at Pherai (after Arachoviti 1994).

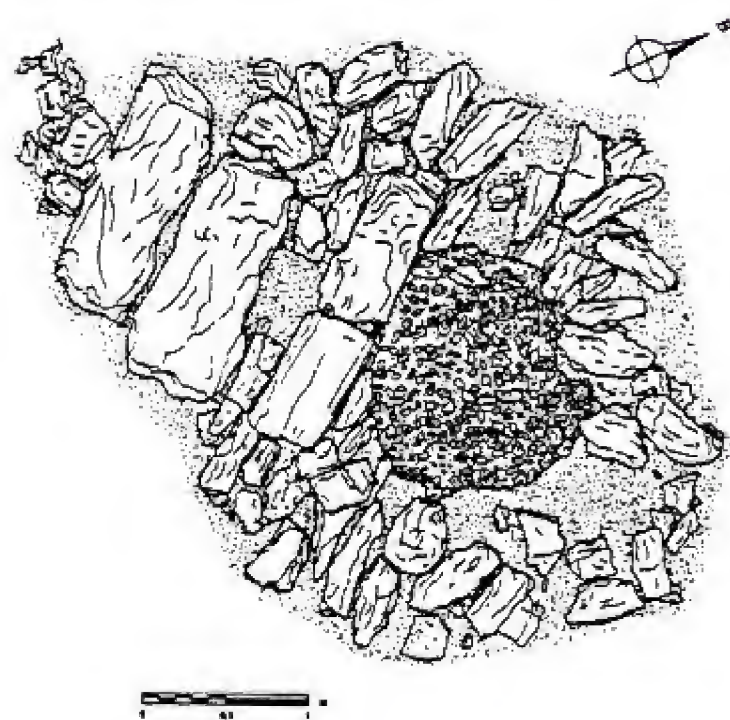


Fig. 4. Tomb ΣΤ III at Pherai (after Doulgeri-Intzesiloglou 1996).

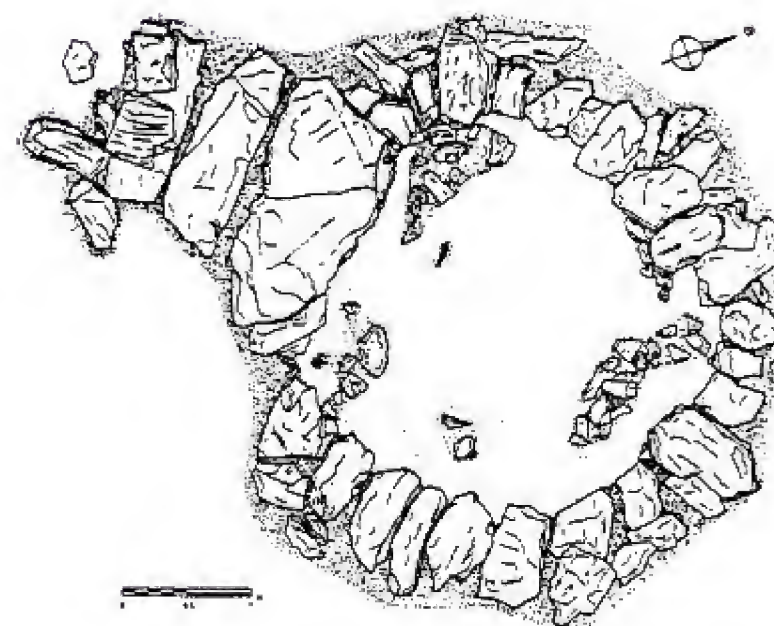


Fig. 5. Tomb E II at Pherai (after Doulgeri-Intzesiloglou 1996).

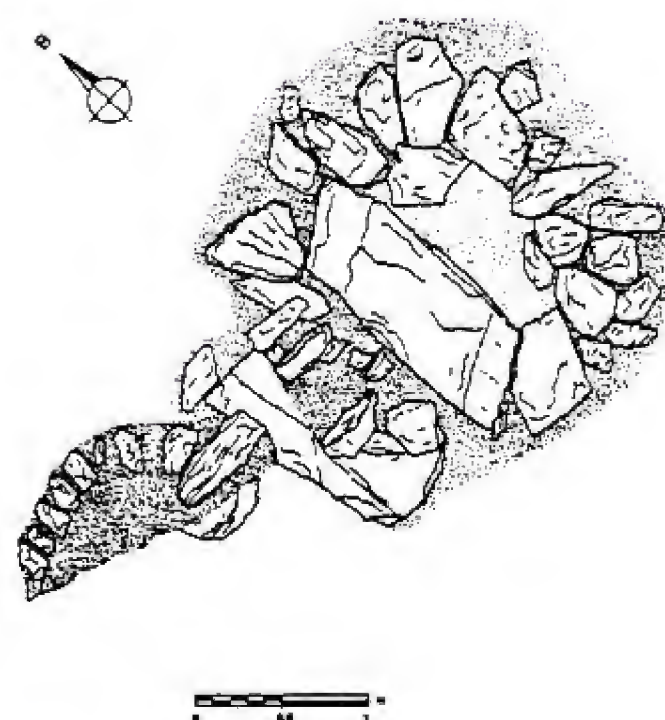


Fig. 6. Tomb Z I at Pherai (after Doulgeri-Intzesiloglou 1996).

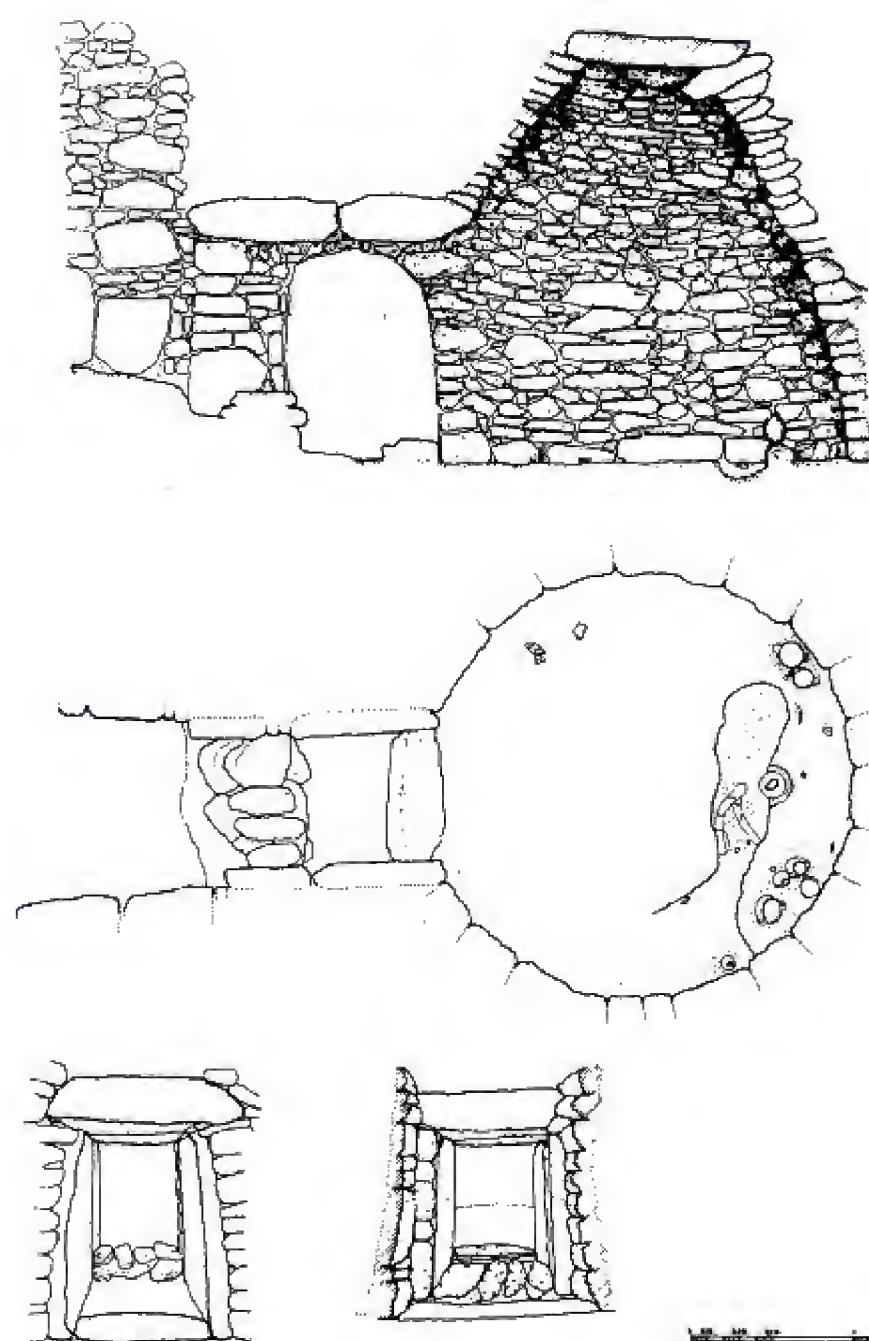
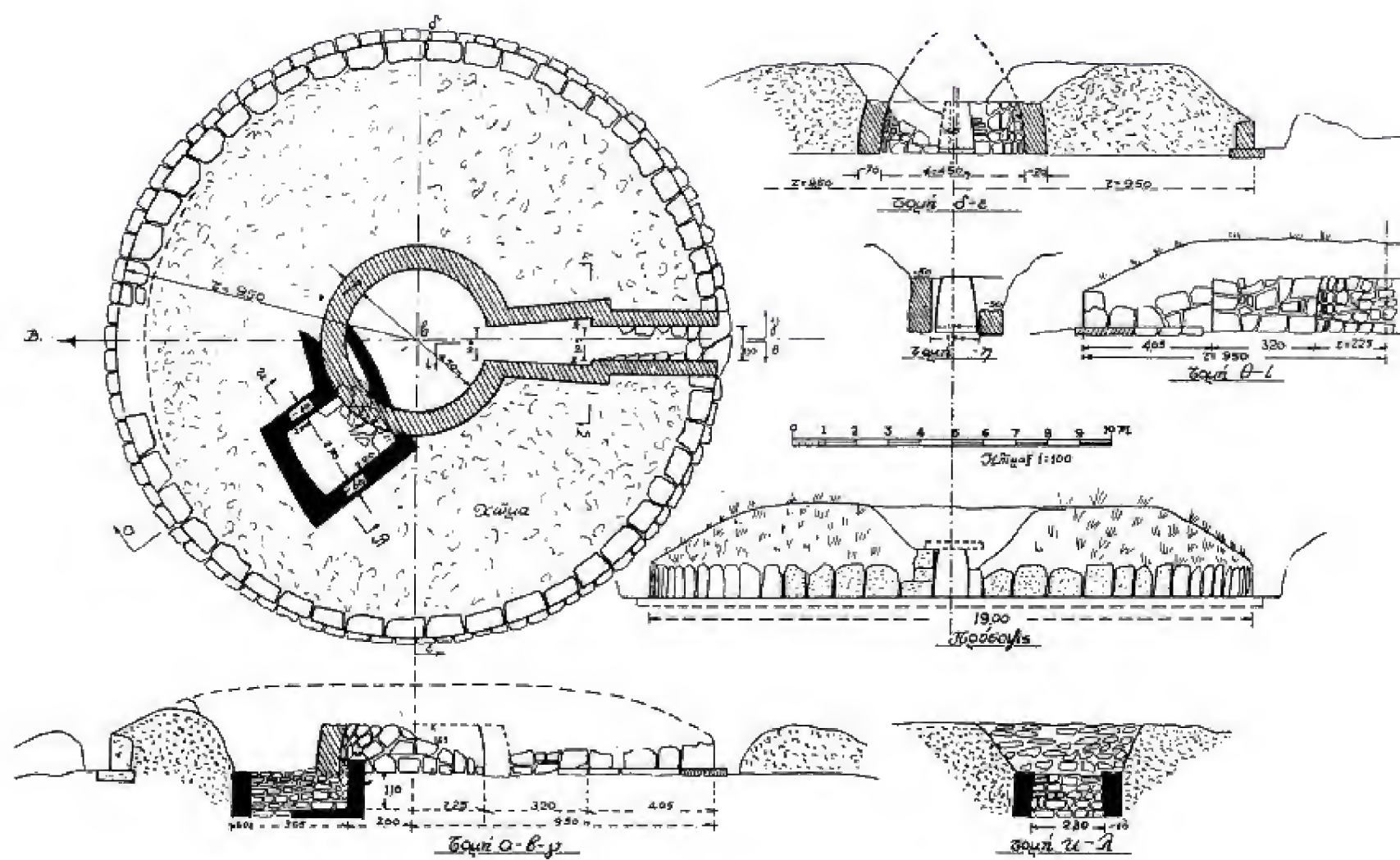
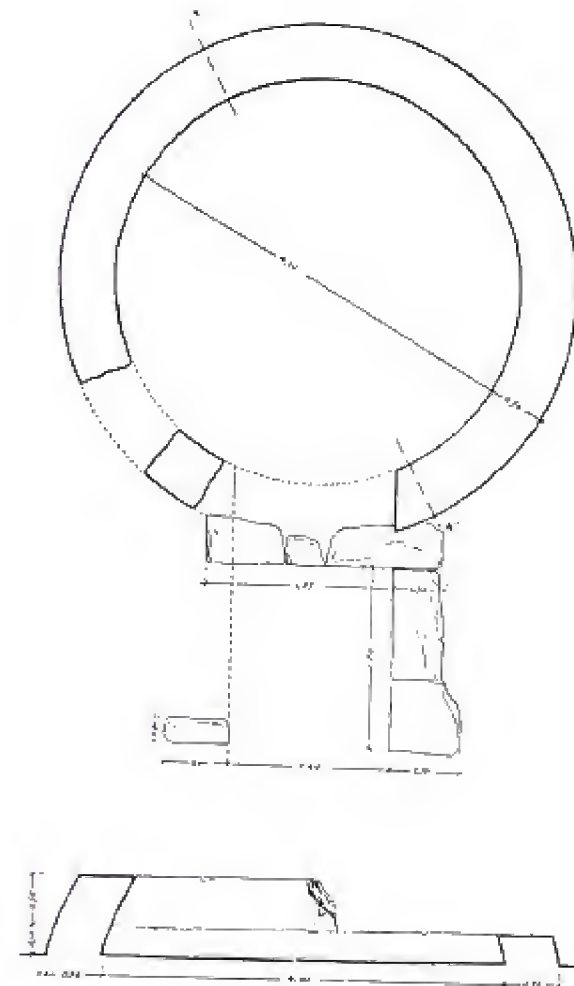
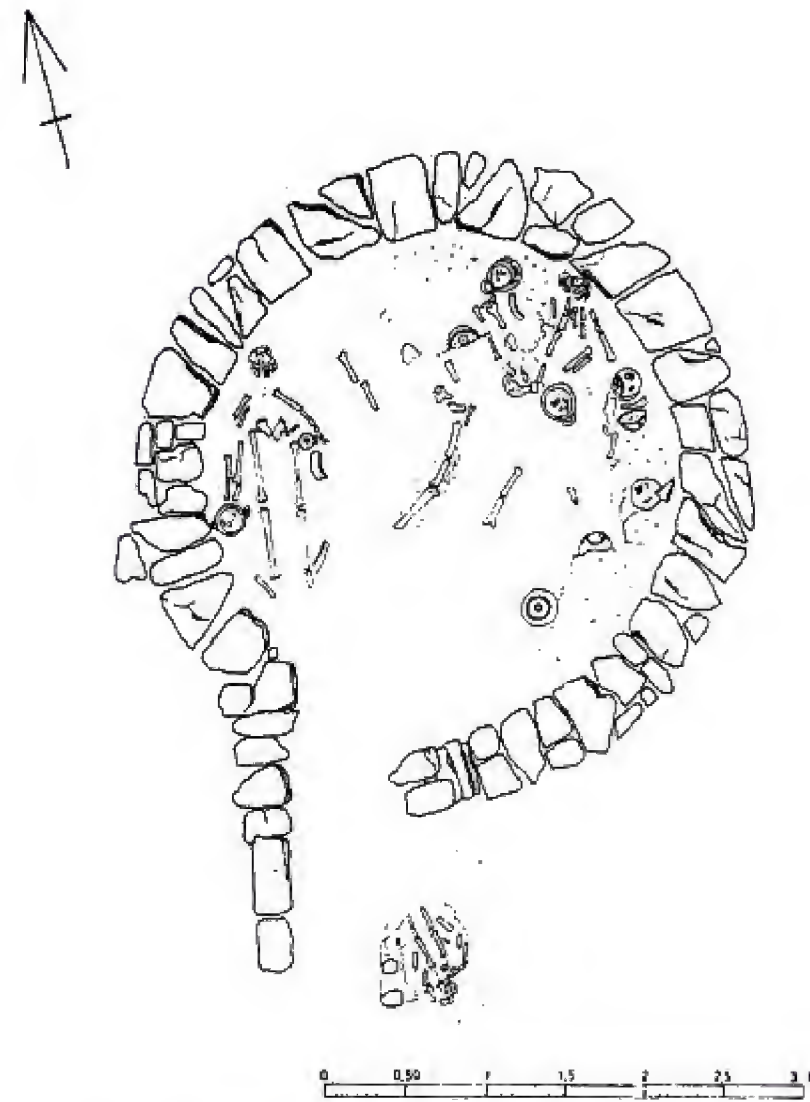


Fig. 7. The tomb at Argyropouli (after Tziaphalias 1981).



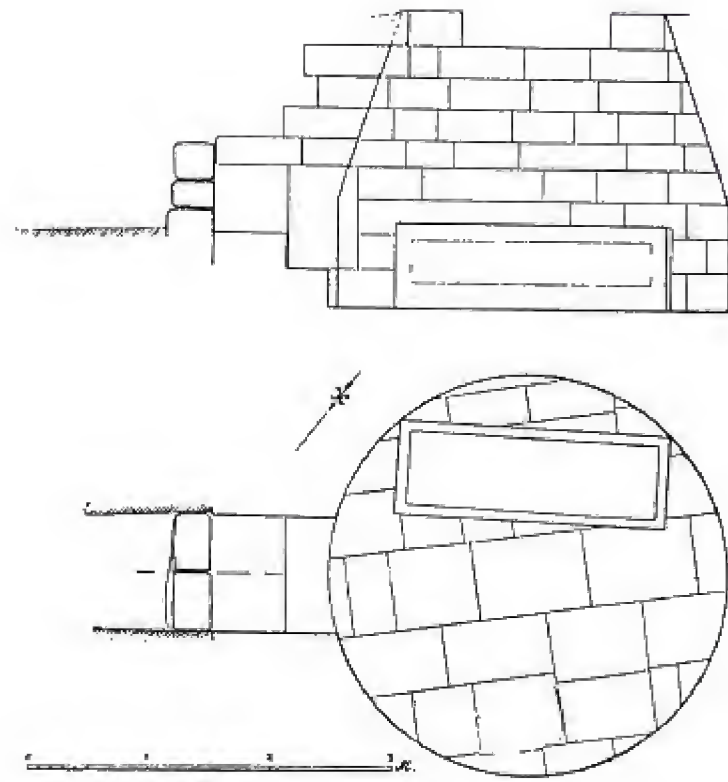


Fig. 11. Tomb B at Krannon (after Theocharis 1960).

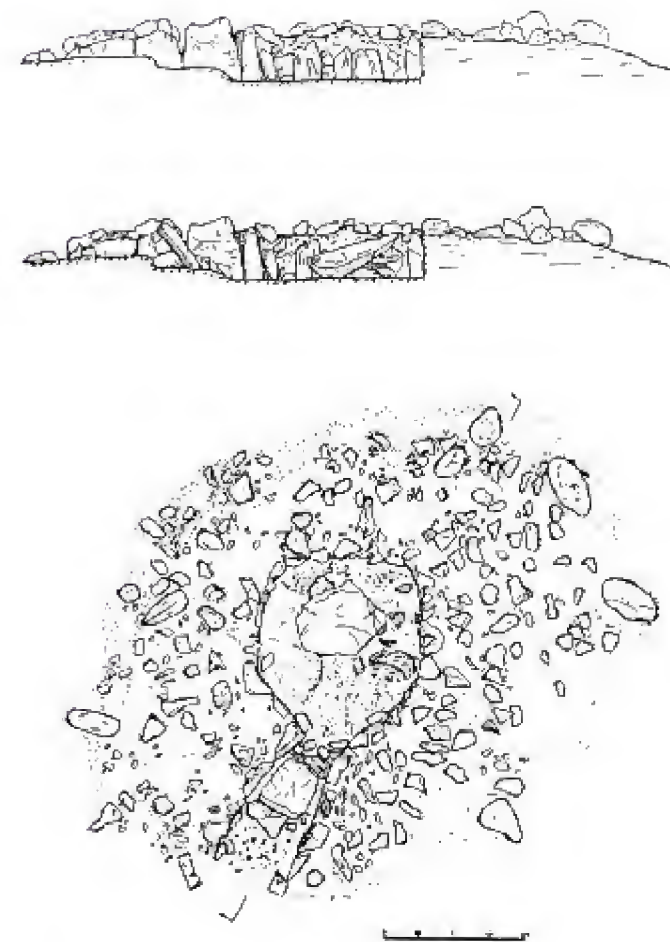


Fig. 12. Tomb 5 at Konstandia (after Chrysostomou 1995).

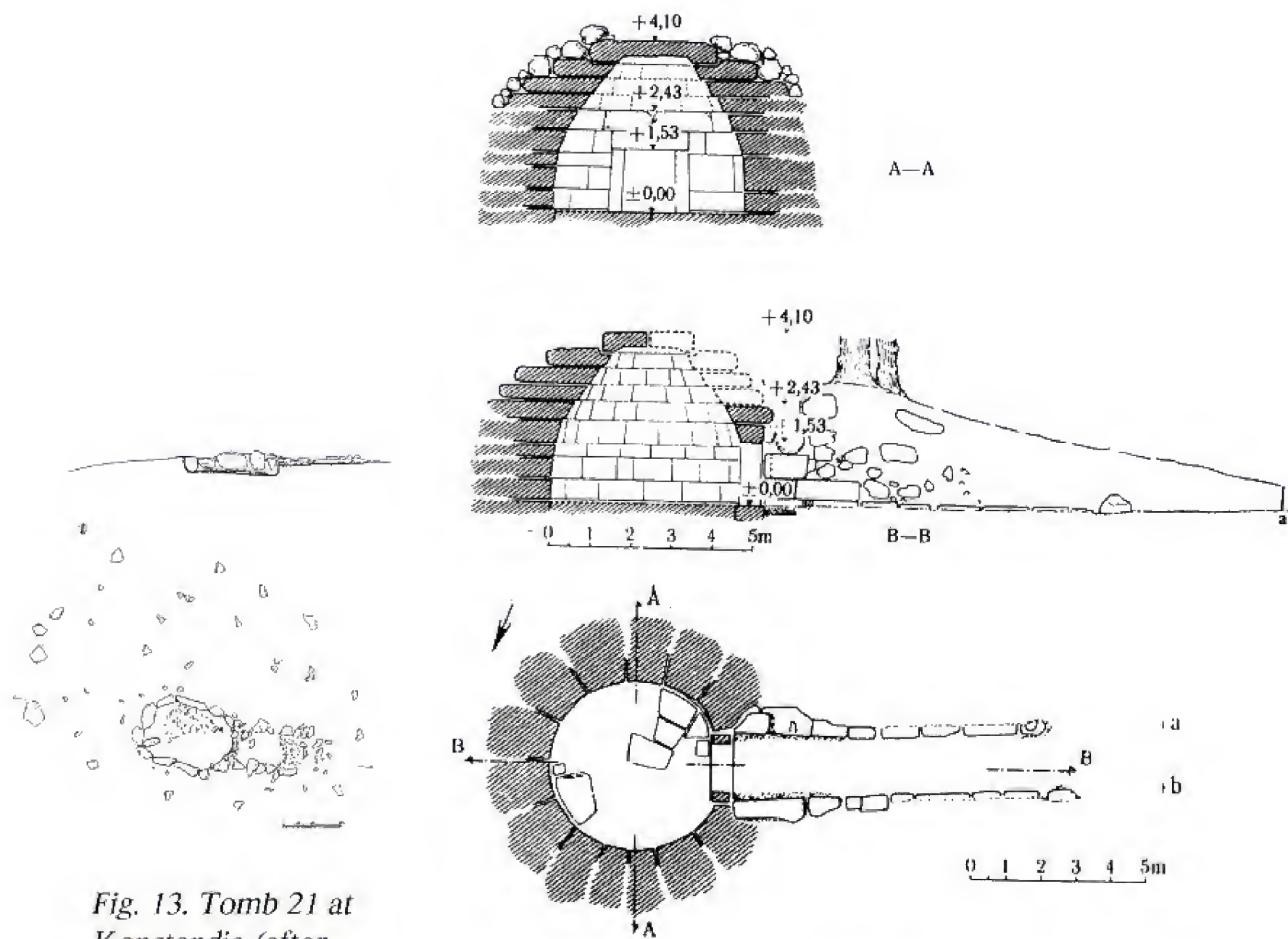


Fig. 13. Tomb 21 at Konstandia (after Chrysostomou 2000).

Fig. 14. The tomb at Kutlucha (after Mansel 1974)

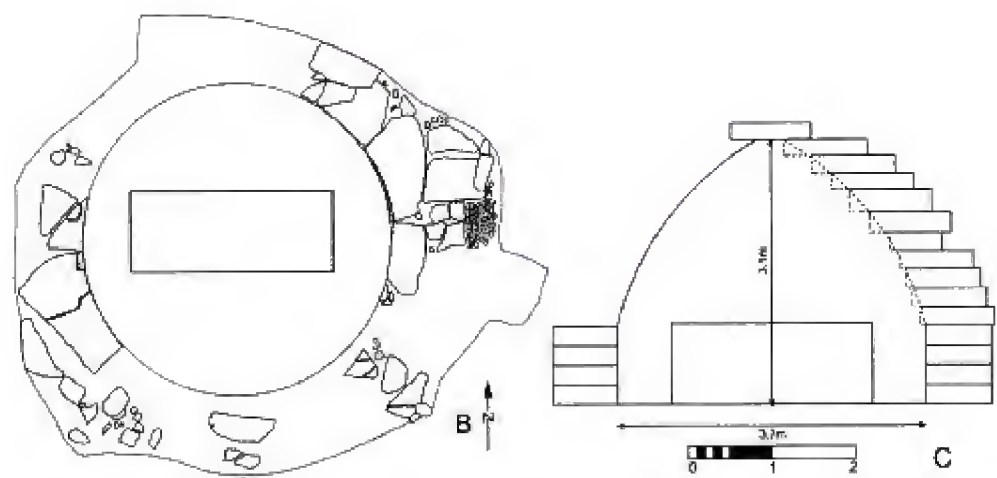
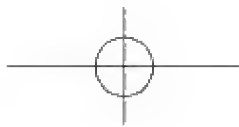


Fig. 15. The tomb at Çan (after Sevinç et al. 2001).

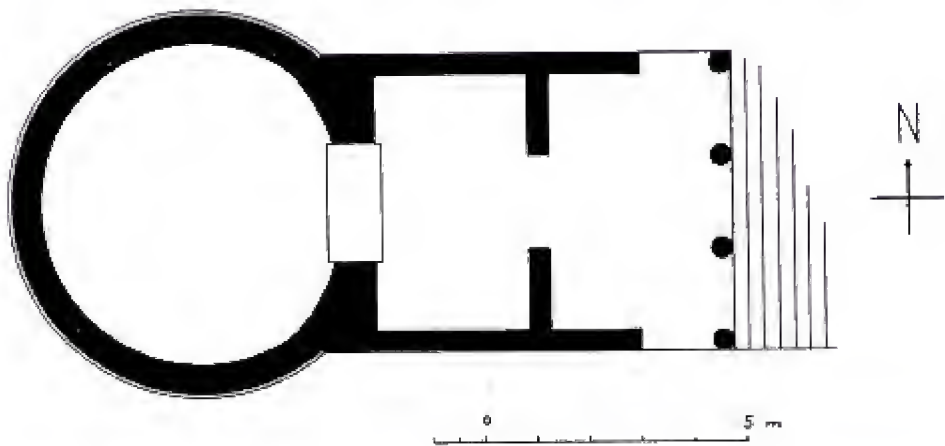


Fig. 16. The Heroon in Stymphalos (after Lauter 1986).

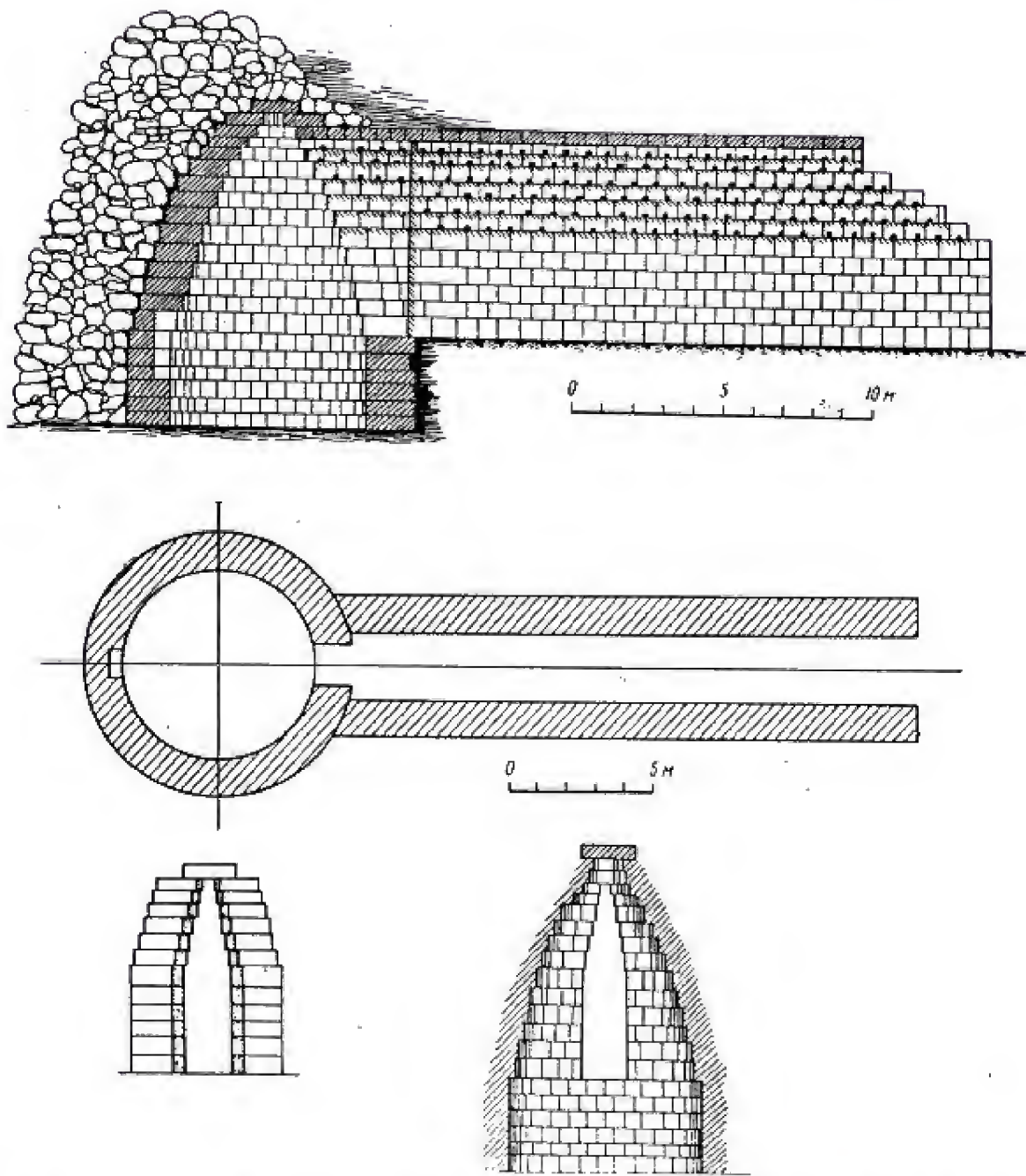
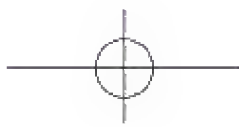


Fig. 17. The Zolotoi Kourgan tomb at Pantikapaion (after Gaidukevich 1981).



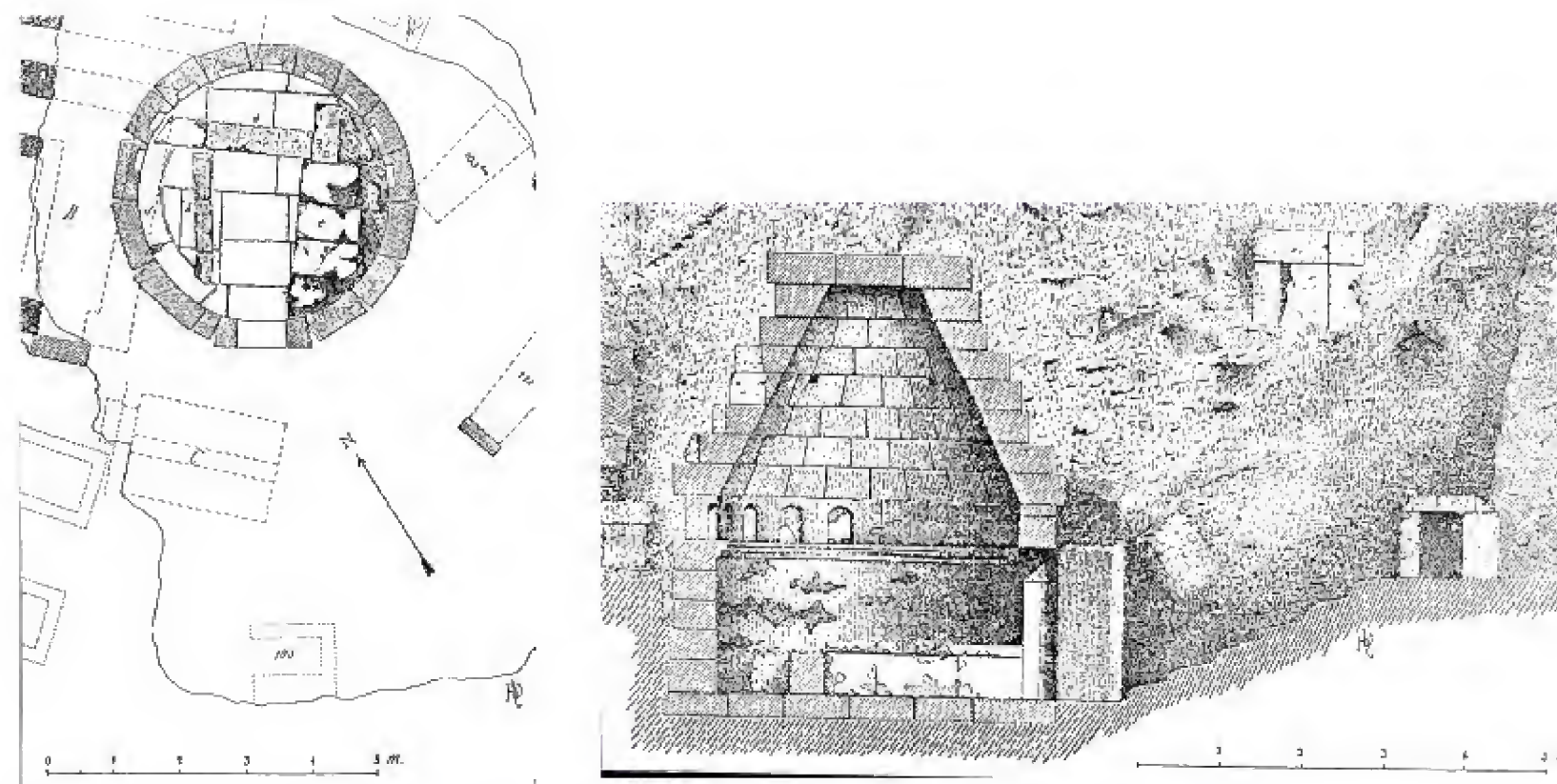


Fig. 18 a-b. The tomb at Cumae (after Pellegrini 1903).

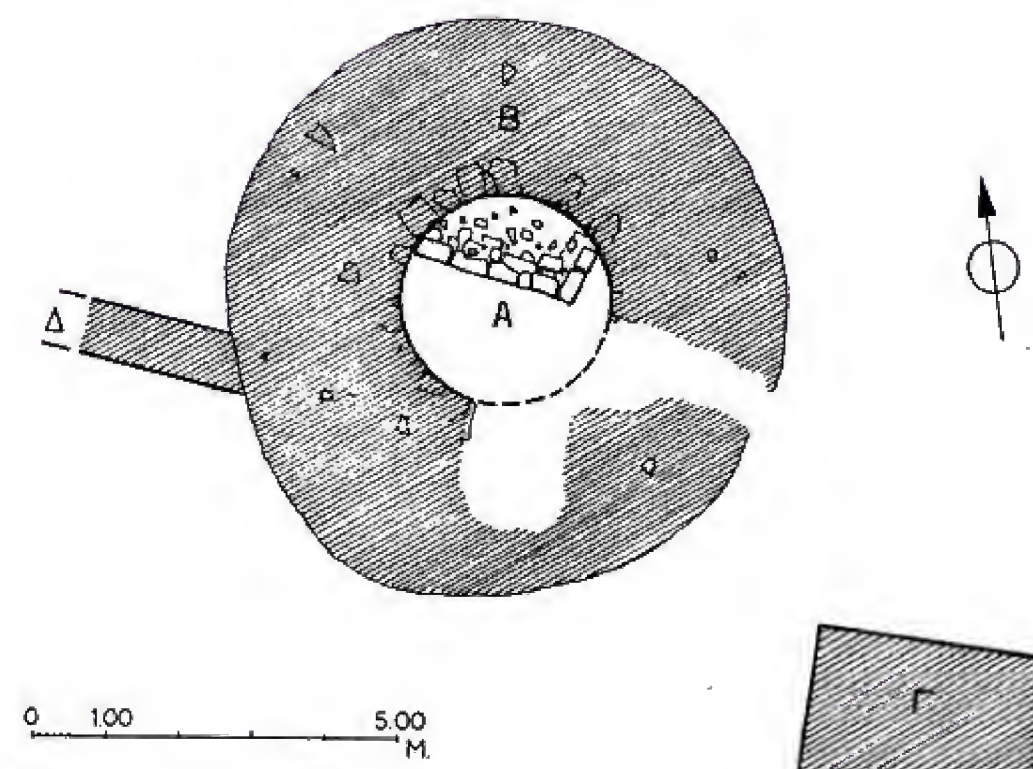


Fig. 19. The tholos at Zone (after Vavritsas 1967).

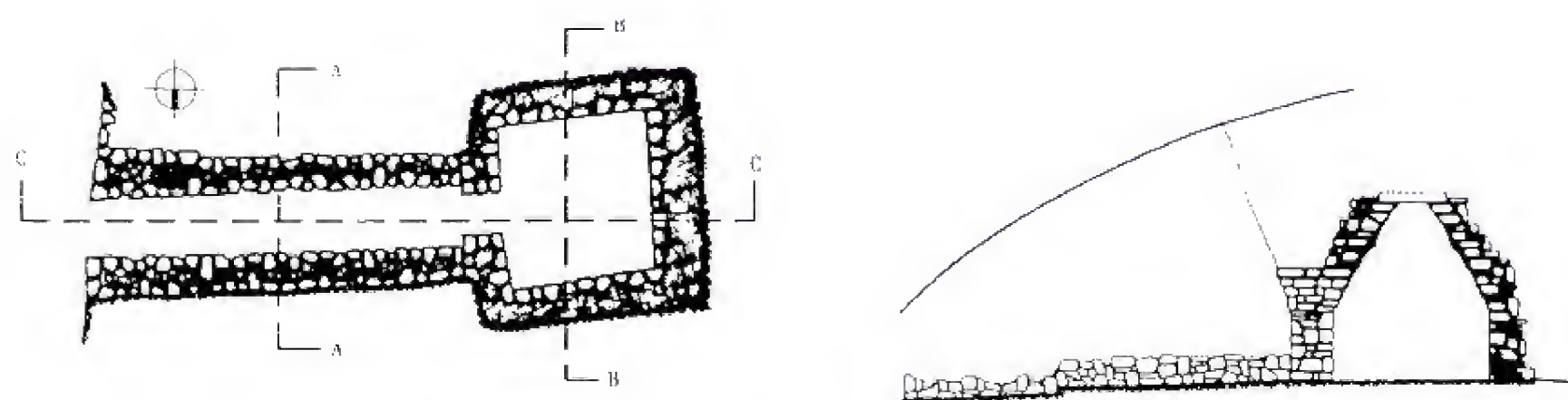


Fig. 20. The tomb at Brestovitsa (after Rousseva 2000).

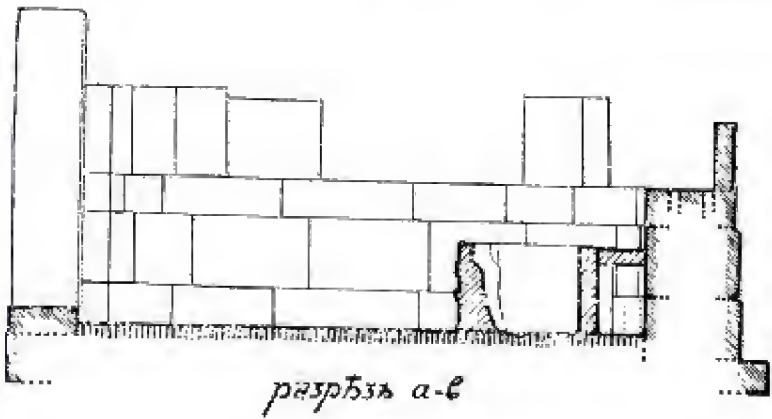
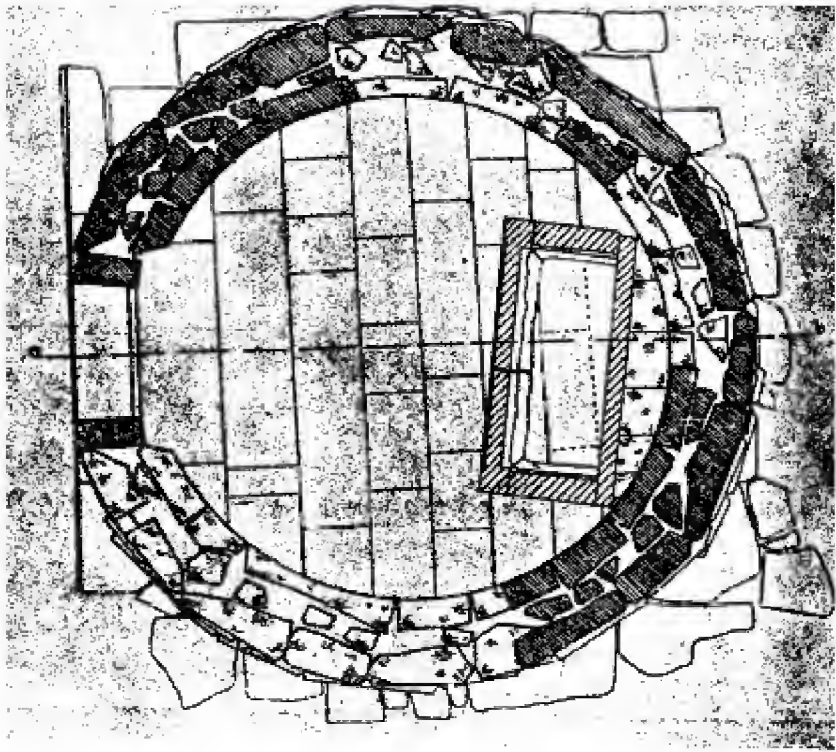


Fig. 21. The tomb at Belovo (after Velkov 1942).

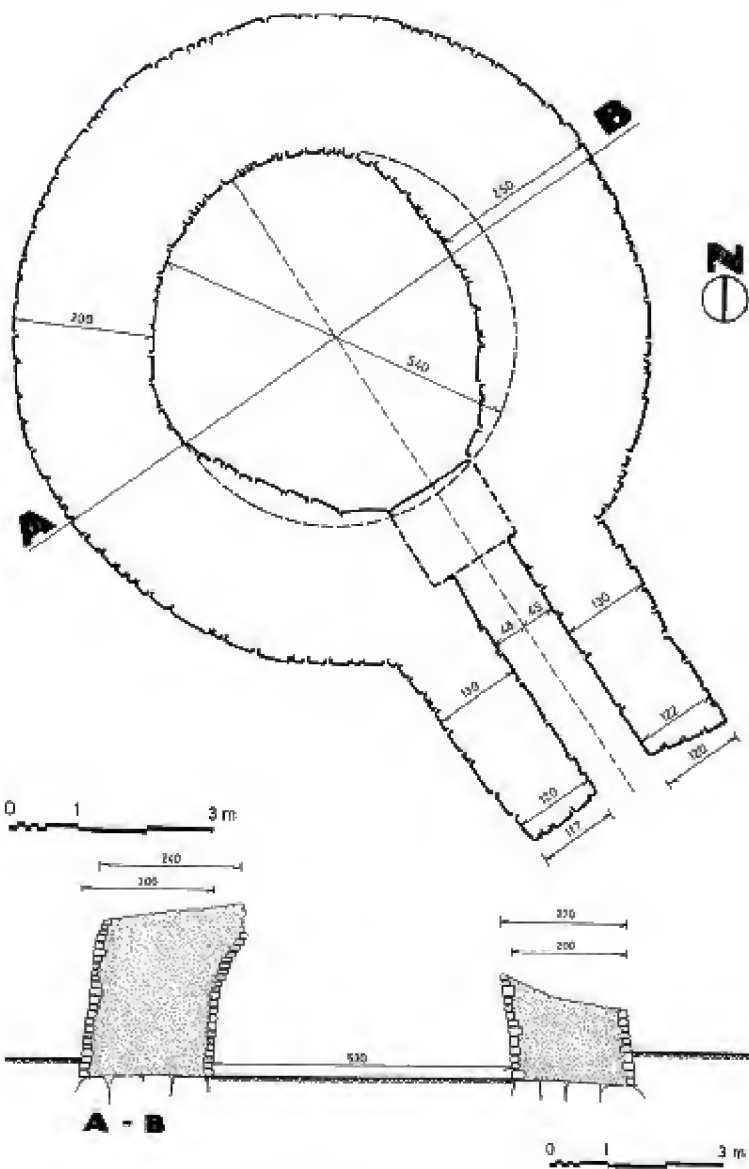


Fig. 22. Tomb 1 at Ravnogor (after Kitov 1989).

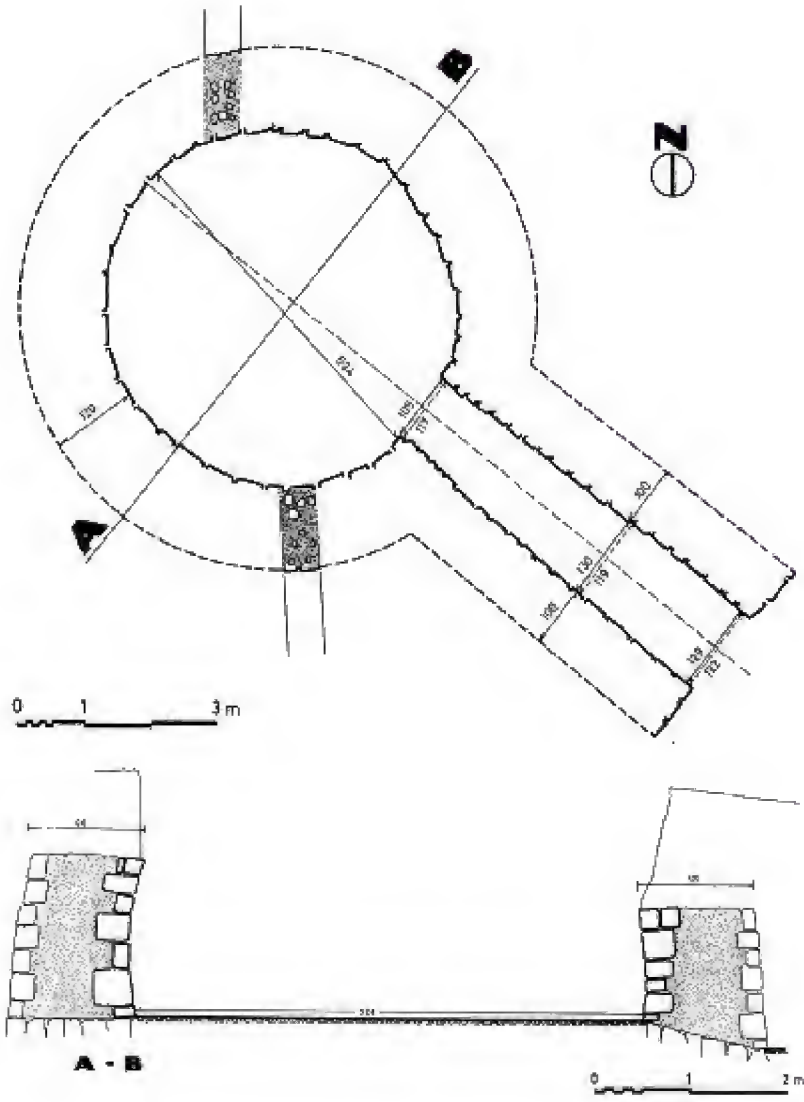


Fig. 23. Tomb 2 at Ravnogor (after Kitov 1989).

H. Dobrzańska, V. Megaw, and P. Poleska (eds.). Celts on the Margin: Studies in European Cultural Interaction VII c BC – I c AD: Essays in Honor of Zenon Woźniak. Kraków 2004: Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of the Sciences (in print)

Nikola Theodossiev

Celtic Settlement in North-Western Thrace during the Late Fourth and Third Centuries BC: Some Historical and Archaeological Notes*

North-western Thrace is a specific region of the northern Balkans that was inhabited by various tribal communities of Thracians, Illyrians and Celts who played important roles in the history and culture of south-eastern Europe during the first millennium BC. Geographically, the ancient region of Thrace covers modern north-western Bulgaria and eastern Serbia, while the most powerful tribal community that emerged in the fifth century BC was known as the Triballi who were Thracian people well described in various Greek and Roman historical sources (for a detailed study on the whole region see: Theodossiev 2000). The early Celtic settlement in this part of ancient Thrace has been always a controversial question examined by different scholars since the first decades of the twentieth century. Some recent detailed studies have thrown additional light on the whole problem (Megaw *et al.* 2000; Megaw 2004; Theodossiev 2000: 82-100) and the following paper is offered in honour of Zenon Woźniak, an international scholar of the highest reputation who has been for many years deeply involved in European Iron Age studies and who is the author of a number of seminal studies of the eastern zone of La Tène culture (Woźniak 1974; 1976).

Various historical records and archaeological finds of the early Hellenistic Age provide us with options for considering the presence of Celts in north-western Thrace and their interaction with local tribal communities. The earliest contacts are

evidenced in Arrianus (*Anab.* I 4, 6-8) and Strabo (VII 3, 8) who testify that Celts from the Adriatic coast attended the armistice and alliance agreements concluded between the Triballian king Syrmos and Alexander the Great in 335 BC (see also Bouzek and Guštin in this volume). During the negotiations, which took place in the territory of the Triballi, the Celts affirmed their vows of friendship and hospitality before the Macedonian king and presumably at precisely that time they established first diplomatic contacts with Triballi (for a compilation of the ancient records see: Katsarov 1919; Cunliffe 1997: 79-80; Megaw 2004; Theodossiev 2000: 81-82; see also discussion of the nature of ancient literary sources concerning Celts in: Dobesch 1991; Rankin 1995).

Any reconstruction of contacts and relations, including gifts exchange, between Celts and Triballi during the last decades of the fourth and the very beginning of the third century BC, or, in contrast, supposed military conflicts and invasion, does find some support in the scanty archaeological finds available. Such is the golden Celtic neckring or torc (Fig. 1), unearthed by chance near Gorni Tsibar, a village situated close to the southern bank of the Danube in north-western Bulgaria (Theodossiev 2000: 116, cat. no. 84 with *op. cit.*, fig. 90; cf Wells 1995 for the possible range of methods of distribution of valuable objects). The torc dates to the end of the fourth or beginning of the third century BC and finds good parallels among a number of La Tène B1/B2 neckrings discovered in other parts of Iron Age Europe (Jacobsthal 1969: 170, no. 46; Megaw and Megaw 2001: 119 ill.168; Moscati *et al.* 1991: 712: no. 129; more recently see also: Megaw 2004). It is known that the torc was considered as a sacred object and symbol of high social status among the Celts (Green 1992: 211-212). Unfortunately, as far as the Gorni Tsibar neckring is concerned, there is no reliable information on the find circumstances or its archaeological context. Therefore, it is only speculation to consider that the torc originally formed part of a Celtic burial or ritual deposit and

thus could be related to a presumed ethnic presence of Celts in that region of Thrace. However, such a presence during the late fourth and early third century BC is not supported by any surviving historical record. Since the torc may alternatively come from a Thracian funeral or other ritual context, it is possible to assume that the precious object was a political gift, offered by some Gaulish chieftain to an unknown Triballian aristocrat during the course of negotiations. One may go further and hypothesise that similar contacts accompanied the first expansion of Celtic tribal groups towards the central Balkans during the last decades of the fourth century BC, as well as during their settlement on the western fringes of north-western Thrace, in the Morava river valley, previously controlled by the Illyrian tribe of the Autariatai. Of course, the Gorni Tsibar torc might be also interpreted as booty, related to the victory of Cassander over the Galatae, which took place in the area of the west Balkan range c. 310 or c. 298 BC (Frey, Szabó 1991: 481 who suggest a relationship between the torc and this historical event).

From the first decades of the third century BC the territory of the Triballi became a marginal zone of the Hellenistic world and during the late 280s and 270s BC indigenous tribal communities faced a well-organized Celtic military invasion (on this incursion and the political history of the region see: Katsarov 1919; Polaschek 1937; Mócsy 1966; Gerov 1967; 1969 with historical sources; Danov 1975-1976; Papazoglu 1978: 52-57, 272-278; 1988; Domaradski 1984; Tacheva 1987: 27-48; Hammond 1989: 298-301; Frey, Szabó 1991; Garašanin 1996; Lazarov 1996; Theodossiev 2000: 82-92; Megaw 2004). However, the great Celtic inrush into north-western Thrace was preceded by military pressure on its western periphery and incursions leading towards the central Balkans, incursions that had already begun in the last decades of the fourth century BC, when, c. 313 BC, the Gauls conquered the Illyrian Autariatae and banished part of them. Soon after that conquest, in 310 BC — or possibly 298 BC — the Macedonian general Cassander

defeated the Celts somewhere in the west Balkan range, presumably in the territory of the Triballi as mentioned above. Supposedly at the same time, military detachments of Gauls, led by Cambaules, reached the borders of Thrace but did not have the courage to invade it.

While the gold torc from Gorni Tsibar may not testify with complete certainty to military conflicts or to a Celtic enclave in north-western Thrace during the late fourth or beginning of the third century BC, the conquest of the Autariatae c. 313 BC and Celtic settlement in the Morava river valley are well evidenced with archaeological material. Thus, the investigation of the flat cemetery in the region of Pecine near Kostolac, a town situated in the lower Morava valley and close to the Danube, in north-eastern Serbia, provides a good illustration of the ethnic changes that occurred in the region (Jovanović 1984, 1985, 1991; Theodossiev 2000: 120-121, cat. no. 113 with full bibliography). A number of Celtic cremation and inhumation graves, the earliest dating to the end of the fourth or beginning of the third centuries BC, are situated around the nine earliest graves, presumably belonging to the Autariatae and dated to the second half of the fourth century BC. These are located in the centre of the cemetery (on possible ethnic identification of the earliest burials see: Theodossiev 2000: 40-41). The continuity observable on this burial site clearly indicates that the new Celtic settlers did not annihilate the Autariataec community but that they assimilated with the indigenous population and presumably mixed ethnically with it (Jovanović 1985, 1992). Therefore, it is possible to assume that from the end of the fourth century BC onwards, the Morava River valley and the regions located to the east turned into a Celto-Illyro-Thracian interaction zone (Theodossiev 2000: 98-100).

The major and well-organized Celtic military invasion into Thrace, Macedonia and Greece occurred at the very end of the 280s BC. Using as a base the already conquered territories of the Autariatae in the central Balkans, in 280 BC the

Gauls led by Cerethrius prepared themselves to fight against the Triballi and the remaining Thracians, Brennus and Acichorius against Paeonia, and Bolgios/Bulgius against Macedonia and Illyria (Pausanias X 19, 7). At the end of the same year or in the next one, Bolgius defeated the Macedonian army and killed Ptolemy Ceraunos. In 279 BC, Brennus— possibly not a historical character — began a campaign against Delphi; the Celtic detachments on their way south devastated the Dardani, neighbours to the south-west of the Triballi. At the same time, those Gauls who were left by Brennus to guard their tribal borders, enlisted 3000 horsemen and 15 000 foot-soldiers to form an army which defeated the Triballi and the Getae, who seem unsuccessfully to have tried to push out the invaders (Iustinus XXV 1, 2-3). In the same year, 279 BC, after the complete defeat of the Celts during the campaign against Delphi and Brennus's suicide, some of the surviving Gauls took the way back led by Bathanattus (later the route was named the 'Way of Bathanattus') and in 278 BC part of them, the so-called Scordisci, settled the lands between Sava, Danube and Morava rivers (Polybius I 6, 4; Iustinus XXIV 4, 8, XXXII 3, 6-8; Posidonius frg. 48J; Athenaeus VI 25, p. 234 a-b). The new Scordiscan settlers completely overran the local Autariatae and formed a powerful tribal alliance that played an important rôle, both politically and military, in the north Balkans until the end of the first century BC (Garašanin 1966, 1996; Todorović 1974; Papazoglu 1978; Jovanović, Popović 1991). Also in 279 BC, another part of the Celtic forces, who survived the defeat at Delphi, led by Comontorios established a tribal state in Thrace with its capital called Tylis, presumably located in the region of Byzantium, where another group of Gauls under the leadership of Leonorius and Loutorius had already settled after they had separated from Brennus during the march through Dardania. The Gaulish tribal state established in this way expanded gradually and reached the Balkan range to the north but was destroyed by the Thracians in 213 BC (recent study in: Lazarov

1996). In 277 BC, Antigonus Gonatas defeated the Gaulish army in a great battle near Lysimacheia, close to the Thracian Chersonese. Thus, he ended the period of Celtic invasion and plundering.

The early settlement of the Scordisci on the western periphery of north-western Thrace, that is, in the lands to the east of the Morava, is not well documented in the ancient sources. Strabo (VII 5, 11) provides vague information on the Triballi being conquered by the Autariatae, and one possible interpretation of this text is that both tribal groups were defeated by the newly settled Scordisci in 278 BC (Papazoglu 1978: 53). This interpretation finds some support in Appianus (*Illyr.* 3) who notes that after the Scordisci defeated the Triballi, the latter withdrew beyond the Danube towards the territory of the Getae. Strabo (VII 3, 13) also describes similar movements of the Getae to the south of the Danube, due to the military pressure from the Scythians, Bastarnae and Sauromatae, while on the other hand, the Triballi, threatened by Illyrians (most likely the Scordisci: Papazoglu 1978: 54-55), escaped to the north of Danube. Unfortunately, the ancient records cannot be placed in a reliable chronological framework (Papazoglu 1978: 54). Most likely, these military confrontations occurred in the 270s and 260s BC, not long after the Triballi had been defeated for the first time by the Brennus's Celts in 279 BC, and when the Scordisci led by Bathanattus had already settled between the Morava and Sava rivers (Garašanin 1996). The Triballian tribes, who had escaped across the Danube, presumably inhabited the region immediately to the east of the Morava, where the Little Scordisci were certainly located during the second and first centuries BC. During the second quarter of the third century BC the Triballian tribal community, after it had experienced the effects of the devastating Celtic invasion, certainly lost forever political control of the peripheral western area.

A number of archaeological finds may be interpreted as a proof of the fluid political situation within north-western Thrace due to the Gaulish invasion and the

following conflicts with the newly settled Scordisci. In primary position is the remarkable silver treasure from Rogozen, which most likely was hidden as a result of military threat. If so, the latest vessels, dated to the end of the fourth century and first decades of the third century BC, testify that the hoard was buried in the period of the great Celtic invasion of 280 BC (Theodossiev 2000: 135, cat. no. 196). About eleven separate hoards, consisting of early Hellenistic gold and silver coins, are known from north-western Thrace and presumably most of these were also hidden during the turbulent events of 270s and 260s BC when the Triballian tribes had been defeated by the Gauls and the Scordisci (Theodossiev 2000: 84, 101 and List).

The ancient sources describing Celtic incursions are well supported by other archaeological finds. In 1959, an iron La Tène C1 sword with fragmentary decorated scabbard (Fig. 2a, b) was found in a funerary pyre, during excavation of the Kopanata Mogila tumulus at c. 2 km to the north of Pavolche, a village situated near the town of Vratsa in north-western Bulgaria (Nikolov 1965: 179-181; Theodossiev 2000: 143, cat. no. 248; Megaw *et al.* 2000). The tumulus belongs to a barrow cemetery consisting of six small mounds located close to the South of the Vrats-Mezdra road. Although the decorated sword scabbard has been previously considered in a number of prior publications (Woźniak 1974: 46-95, fig. 9: 6, 190, list II, no. 109), only recently has a detailed study provided a complete analysis of the find and in particular the decorated scabbard. The scabbard design, which most probably is derived from the dragon- or bird-pair motifs, may be compared with a number of decorated scabbards and swords known in Slovenia, Croatia and Transdanubia, a style which spread throughout Iron Age Europe in La Tène B and C; undoubtedly, the Pavolche sword is a Celtic product (Megaw *et al.* 2000; Megaw 2004). Rather than an occasional import or status-enhancing gift or booty belonging to a deceased Triballian warrior, it might be suggested that the Pavolche

sword might be evidence of a Scordiscan intruder buried in the mound some time around 270-200 BC. However, the funerary rite and grave construction — a pyre within a tumulus — evidenced by the Pavolche barrows is entirely typical of the Triballi during the Hellenistic period and is not known among the Scordisci (Theodossiev 2000: 29-31, 44-45); moreover, almost all grave goods found at Pavolche are of Thracian origin. Therefore, having in mind that there is not a single historical record testifying to Celtic settlement in the eastern part of north-western Thrace during the third century BC, and given that all sources describe a period of invasion and conflict, and moreover, that at present there are no excavated graves in the region that can be regarded as typically Celtic (*cf* Theodossiev 2000: 25-48), one may conclude that the Pavolche sword was most likely booty or a gift buried within a Triballian funerary context. Of course, one may not exclude the probability that some Gaulish (that is, Scordiscan) ethnic enclaves existed in the region during the third century BC (*cf* Zirra 1976; Tacheva-Hitova 1978; for Celtic enclaves in north-eastern Thrace: Lazarov 1996). Following from this, any Celts who may have settled among the indigenous Triballi would have been assimilated and adopted Thracian funerary customs. In any case, the Pavolche sword scabbard reflects the complex and often violent interactions and the dynamic relationship between Celts and Thracians in a period of war, invasion and ethnic changes.

Another curious object, which may suggest contacts and interaction between the Scordisci and Triballi, is a small inscribed cult relief (Fig. 3a-c), a chance find most likely from western Bulgaria and currently located in the National Museum of Archaeology, Sofia (Manov 1993; Theodossiev 2000: 58, fig. 155). The carved stone illustrates well the religious beliefs of the Scordisci who obviously worshiped Epona, the tribal ancestor-god and the warrior hero. Since the object comes from no clear archaeological context and lacks exact parallels among Celtic cult reliefs, it is not easy to provide a precise dating for the piece; only the inscription gives some

support for a third century BC date (Manov 1993). The ritual function of the object is also unknown but carved stones displaying various imagery were widely used in Celtic cult practices (Cunliffe 1992; 1997; Green 1986; 1992; 1995: 466-468; Megaw and Megaw 2001; Moscati *et al.* 1991). While the ritual purpose is obscure, the understanding of the figures carved on the Sofia object seems to be relatively clear. On the one side of the relief, there is a mare, which in this particular case might be interpreted as a hippomorphic personification of Epona, the Celtic horse-goddess (Green 1986: 91-94, 173-174; 1992: 90-92; 1995: 479). Epona was known as a deity of fertility and prosperity but she was also associated with beliefs relevant to death and the underworld. The other side of the carved stone shows a man in a fight to the death with an enormous snake. Most probably, this is a representation of the tribal warrior-chieftain and hero, presumably regarded as a mythical ancestor and represented in a moment of heroic confrontation, fighting a chthonic reptile (*cf.* Green 1986: 185-186; 1992: 194-195 on the healing, chthonic, fertility, protection and evil associations of the snake in the Celtic cults). In Irish mythology, the warrior chief Finn mac Cumhaill kills great water snakes, while the Ulster hero Conall Cernach is recorded as overcoming an enormous snake which guards a treasure (Green 1992: 64-65, 98-99, 194-195). On the edge of the Sofia relief, a second snake is depicted together with a male facing to the front contiguous to a short incised inscription – ΣΚΟΡΔΑΟ (= genitive: ‘belonging to Scordus’). It is beyond any doubt that this is the image of the tribal eponym and ancestor-god Scordus, attested as Scordiscus in the sources (Appianus, *Illyr.* 2). Although the fighting scene between the Scordiscan warrior hero and the snake finds good parallels in later Insular Celtic myths, an alternative reading would be that the imagery was influenced by the Delphic dragon-slaying myth concerning the fight between Apollo and Python. In such a case, it is possible even to assume a Graeco-Celtic religious syncretism and to suggest that the carved cult stone was

produced after the failed Gaulish campaign against Delphi in 279 BC. As discussed above, this event was of crucial importance for the establishment of the Scordiscan tribal community and its later political development. It is interesting that the cult relief is the first monument, which displays the use of Greek script by Scordisci in the Hellenistic period.

A number of historical records of the late second and first centuries BC reinforce the earlier evidence on multilateral interaction and relationship, clearly testifying that the Scordisci inhabited the western regions of north-western Thrace and were there intermingled with Thracians and Illyrians. Ammianus Marcellinus (XXVII 4, 4) mentions that the Scordisci occupied part of Thrace while Strabo (VII 5, 12) specifies that the Great Scordisci lived between the Noaros (present-day Sava or Drava) and the Morava rivers, while the Little Scordisci inhabited lands to the east of the Morava in the neighborhood of the Triballi and Moesi (for the distribution of the Scordisci in the Hellenistic age see: Papazoglu 1978: 354-389). Moreover, both archaeological finds and historical sources testify that during the late Hellenistic period the Little Scordisci became ethnically intermingled with the indigenous Autariatae and Triballian tribes in the Morava valley and further to the east; this led to syncretic ethnic and cultural processes and turned the region into a Celto-Illyro-Thracian interaction zone (Garašanin 1957, 1966; Todorović 1966; Zirra 1976; Jovanović 1992; Theodossiev 2000: 85-92, 98-100; Gerov 1967). The co-existence of different tribes and their ethnic mixing are clearly evidenced by Strabo (VII 3, 2 et 11; VII 5, 1-2), who describes Scordisci crossed with Thracians and Illyrians and writes of Thracians mixed with Celts and Scythians, obviously having in mind north-eastern Thrace and the regions to the north of the Danube. Presumably, it is due to these reasons that other ancient authors, when they describe Celtic ferocity, also identify the Scordisci with the Thracians, (Iulius Florus, *Epitom. de T. Liv.* I 39 et III 4; Rufius Festus IX; Orosius, *Hist. adv. pag.* V 23, 17-19; Iordanes, *Rom.*

219). As discussed above, the Celtic flat cemetery at Kostolac clearly indicates ethnic change and assimilation, which occurred at the end of the fourth century and into the first decades of the third centuries BC, before the region fell under the political control of the Scordisci during the 270s BC. Therefore, it is possible to suppose that the historical sources, describing the localization of the Little Scordisci and the ethnic mixing between Celts, Thracians and Illyrians during the late second and first centuries BC, may reflect earlier events at the time of the great Gaulish invasion, which was to have so strong an impact and to change for ever certain parts of the early Hellenistic world.

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CAPTIONS

Fig. 1 – Golden torc from Gorni Tsibar (after Theodossiev 2000)

Fig. 2 a – Iron scabbard and sword from Pavolche (after Megaw R. et al. 2000)

Fig. 2 b – Decorated front plaque of Pavolche scabbard (after Megaw R. et al. 2000)

Fig. 3 a, b, c – Inscribed cult relief from Western Bulgaria (after Theodossiev 2000)

Celts in Thrace?

A Re-Examination of the Tomb of Mal Tepe, Mezek with Particular Reference to the La Tène Chariot Fittings

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Julij EMILOV / Vincent MEGAW

INTRODUCTION

More than a century has passed since the first accidental discoveries of finds around the Mal Tepe tumulus, the “Mound of the Treasure” near the village of Mezek in south-eastern Bulgaria (Hamdy 1908, pl.VIII-IX) and eight decades since Bogan Filov explored the *tholos* tomb there. Despite the efforts of several generations of researchers and general progress in later studies on tomb architecture (Стоянова 2002; Stoyanov 2005; Theodossiev 2007), breastplate and bronze vessels (Ognenova 1961; Venedikov 1977; Archibald 1985; 1998, 253-258, 277), jewellery items and horse-harness (Pfrommer 1990; Tonkova 1997; 2010; Stoyanov 2010) or the attempts of Domaradzki to analyze the sequence in burial practice (Домарадски 1988; 1998), it is still difficult to achieve a coherent explanation of multiple activities in the Mal Tepe tomb as reflected in the available archaeological data.

Following this retrospective line it is may be an appropriate occasion to mark one more anniversary. Seven decades ago Paul Jacobsthal (1940) recognized some of the objects from the tomb as Celtic and associated with the totemic bronze figure of a boar – “it obviously belonged to the Celtic burial” though a provincial piece (Jacobsthal 1944, 152). Thus was included an additional unknown variable in the already complex Mal Tepe equation.

The imagery of the chariot fittings from Mezek (**fig. 1-6**) is probably the first aspect of the tomb which springs to mind when one is looking for material evidence of the early third century BC Celtic raids in the Eastern Balkans. Considered as one of the finest examples of the “Plastic” or “Disney style”, the mounts with their immediately recognisable La Tène design as will be discussed below serve almost like a trade-mark of the Thracian Galatians and the historically documented Celtic expansion to the south-eastern corner of Europe (Домарадски 1984; Megaw / Megaw 2001, 140-141; Fol 1991; Mac Congail 2008; Megaw 2010; Anastassov 2011; Anastassov et al. forthcoming).

Beyond any doubt to find chariot fittings with a presumed western origin among the objects from an Early Hellenistic *tholos* tomb in Thrace is an extraordinary discovery and one which has provoked many discussions and various interpretative scenarios¹. How, when and why parts of a Celtic chariot were deposited in the tomb are still troublesome questions and a constantly recurring topic in contemporary academic debates on the interrelations between Celts and local

¹ For the latest of previous reviews see: Megaw 2005; Emilov 2005; Stoyanov 2005; 2010.

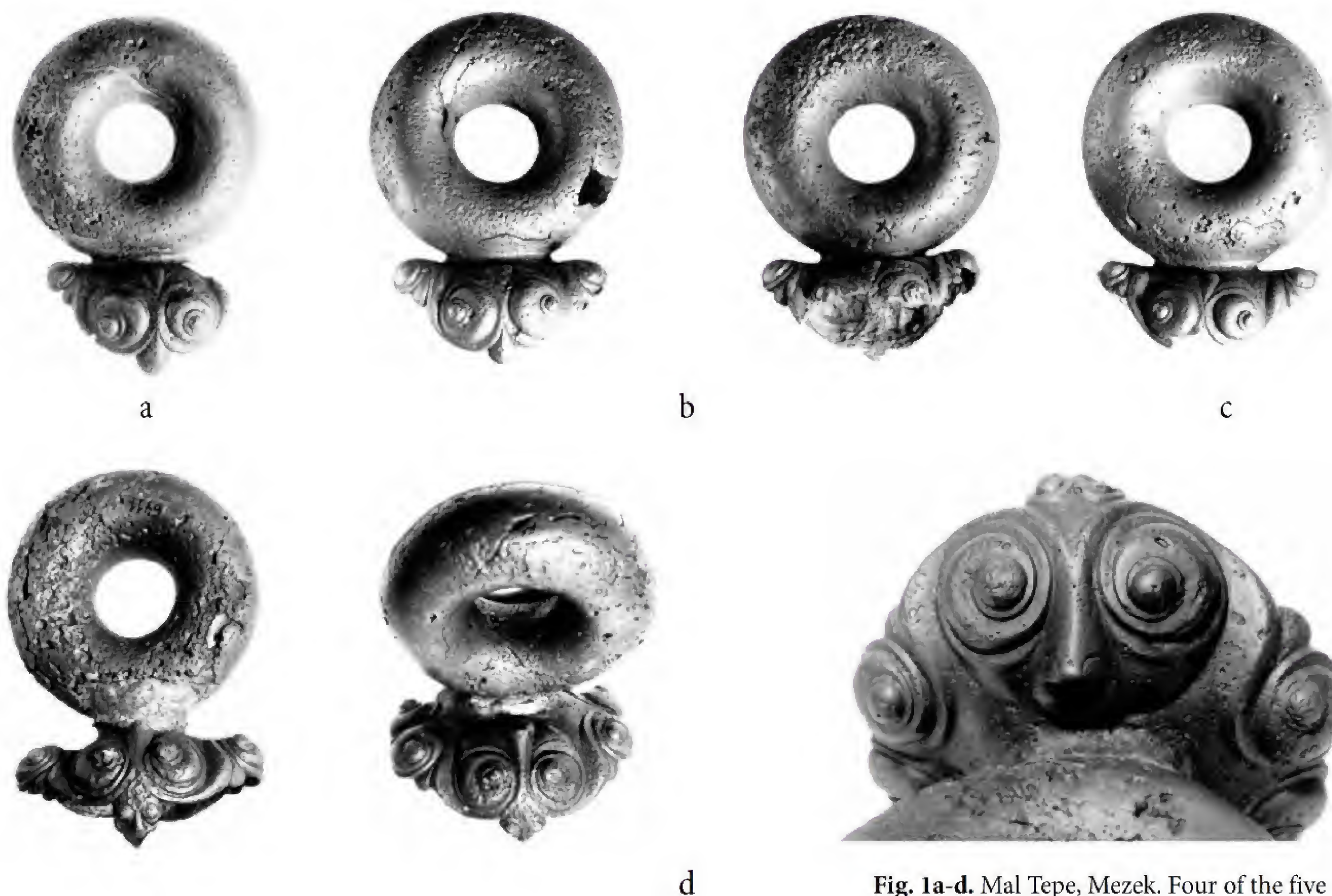


Fig. 1a-d. Mal Tepe, Mezek. Four of the five surviving bronze terrets or rein-rings. National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Sofia.
Photos: Roza Staneva



Fig. 2. Mal Tepe, Mezek. Five rein-rings photographed prior to cleaning in the 1970s. National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Sofia.
Photos: Roza Staneva



Fig. 3. Mal Tepe, Mezek. Bronze finial from larger rein-ring. National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Sofia.
Photo: Roza Staneva

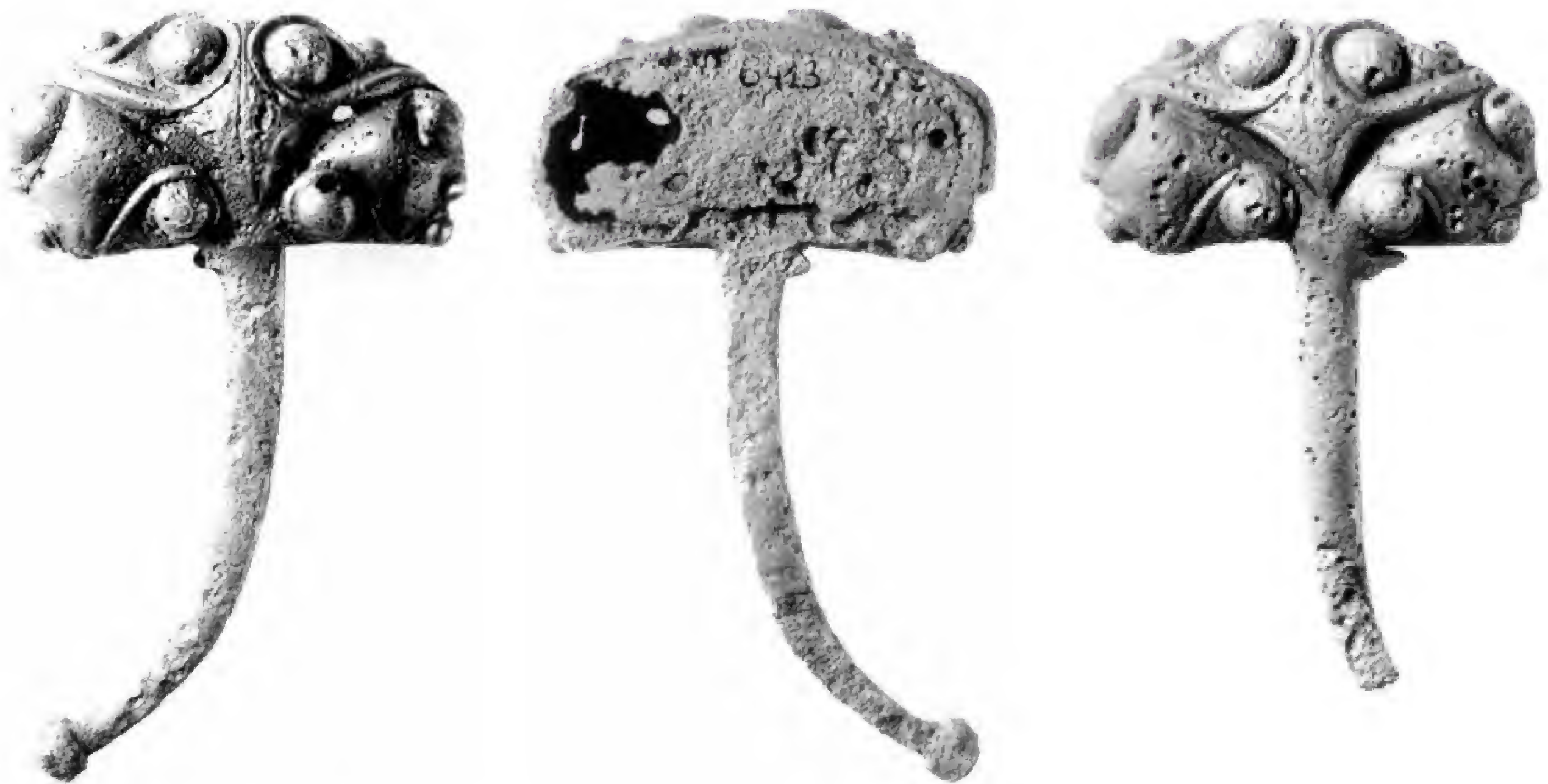


Fig. 4a-b. Mal Tepe, Mezek. Bronze linchpins. National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Sofia. Photos: Roza Staneva

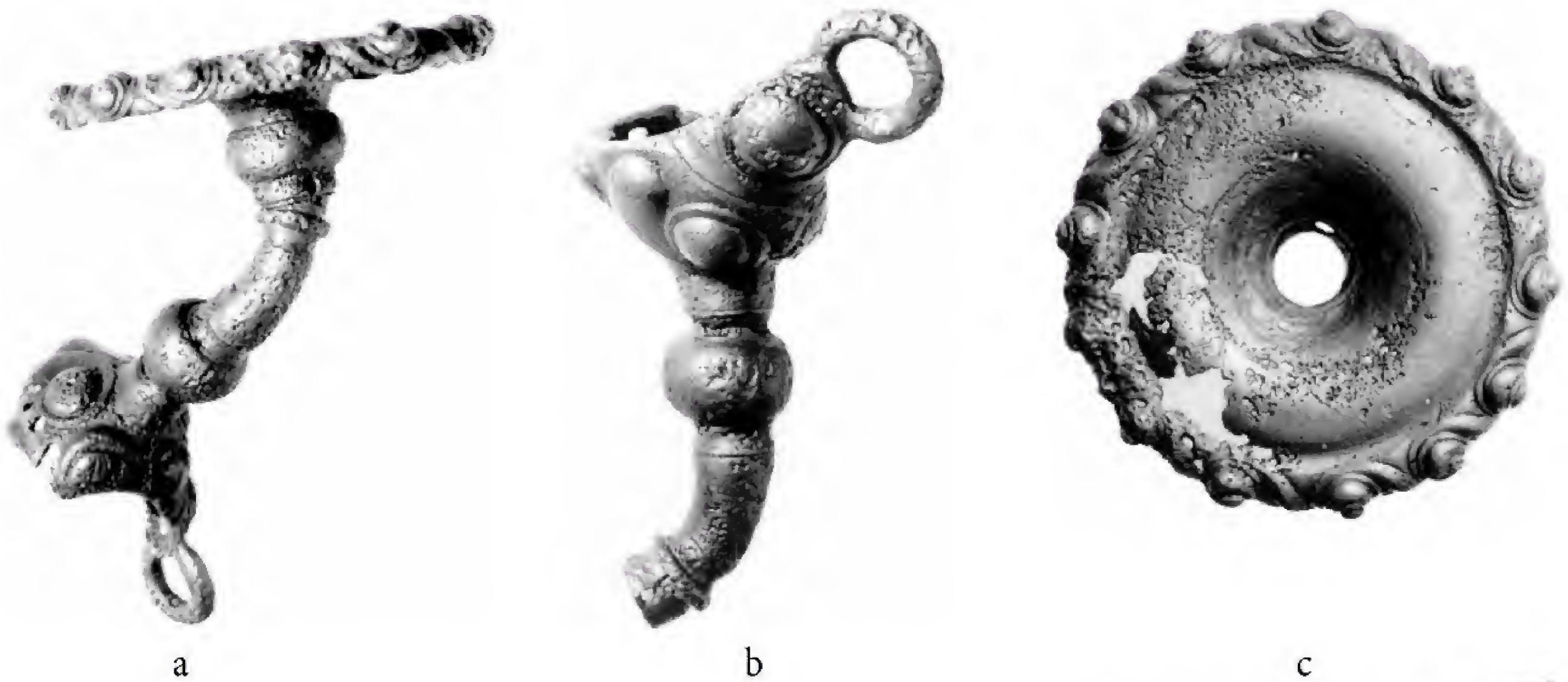


Fig. 5a-c. Mal Tepe, Mezek. Right-angled bronze fitting. National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Sofia. Photos: Roza Staneva



Fig. 6. Mal Tepe, Mezek. Bronze forked fitting. National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Sofia. Photo: Roza Staneva

communities in the eastern Balkans. The very nature of the evidence currently available, however, does not allow any definitive solution of the Mal Tepe puzzle and problems concerning dating and interpreting the “Disney style” chariot mounts found at the site remain (see further p. 13-14 below). Therefore, the authors of the present paper offer their contextual and stylistic comments on this fascinating material in order to reassess the issue and to explore the various options in the analysis of the “Celtic” artefacts from the tomb.

IN SEARCH OF CONTEXT

Dealing with the first of the essential questions – how the chariot fittings were deposited in the tomb – we face a major problem of uncertainty about their exact provenance. Filov went to great lengths to obtain information on the original position of the artefacts from local residents who had entered into the building (Филов 1937, 4, 28). It was however not possible to reconstruct the spatial distribution of a large number of finds, including the “Disney style” chariot mounts (Филов 1937, 22, 55, 61, #15-16, 29-31, обр. 23, 52-53, 69; Домарадски 1998, 50-51; Stoyanov 2010, 116).

In his review of the circumstances of the Mal Tepe discoveries Filov is also in doubt if the information about their provenance provided by the local residents should be regarded as truly indicative of their initial position within the tomb (Филов 1937, 28-30). Evidence of significant changes in the structure and secondary graves, located under the upper pavement of the superimposed floor levels in the antechambers support Filov’s hypothesis of multiple entries having occurred over time inside the building and that such activities had been taking place there already in the Hellenistic period. Disturbances in the interior of the tomb noted by Filov could have been caused by treasure-hunters either in antiquity or in later periods, but having in mind the observations on the strata in front of the corridor and the analysis of the finds it is an unconvincing explanation. The only traces of breakthrough are related to the modern discovery of the monument in mid-January 1931 (Филов 1937, 13-15). Hence, it is plausible that the structure of Mal Tepe was an unplundered tomb until the villagers from Mezek uncovered the entrance of the *dromos*, removed one of the slabs, which was blocking access, and collected all the remains – artefacts and horse bones – from the inner compartments (Филов 1937, 3-14; Домарадски 1998, 50-51; Stoyanov 2005, 123). Transferring the precious objects to the Mezek County Chambers was a well-intentioned initiative, but it placed research on the tomb inventory at a considerable disadvantage in the light of the resultant incomplete record of contexts for the find-spots.

Available data on the location of some of these finds indicated in Filov’s publication (Филов 1937, 28-31, 38-41, 56-75) contains information on spatial distribution of items “at the last using of the tomb”, prior to its closure (Домарадски 1998, 51; Stoyanov / Stoyanova forthcoming). Attribution of objects, discovered by the local residents on or above the upper paved floor (fig. 7/A, C), to earlier or later grave inventories (Filov 1937, 302) as well as attempts to make a division in the assemblage rely exclusively on speculations about function and the narrow dating of these items (see Tzochev forthcoming).

Another group of finds from the interior of the building were discovered during the archaeological exploration of the structure. In the

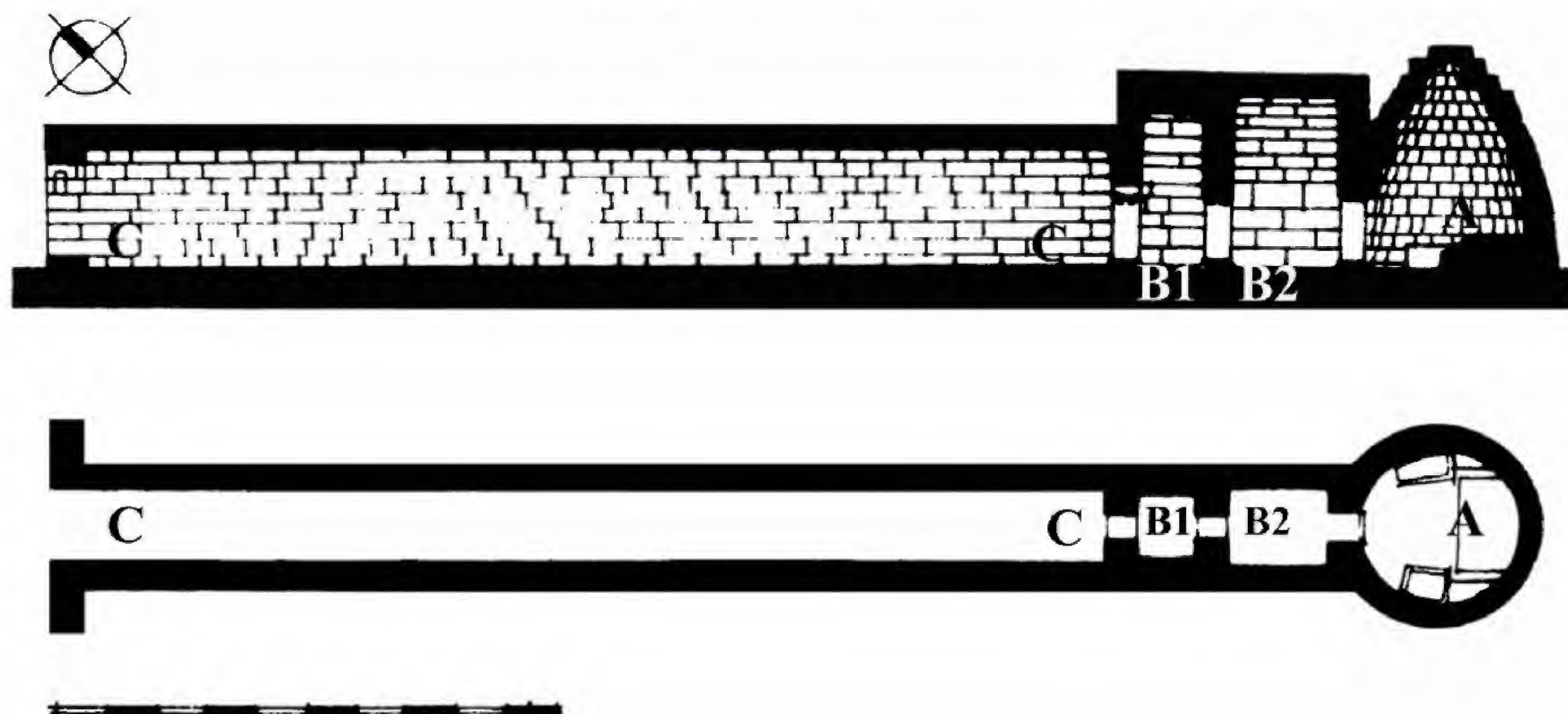


Fig. 7. Cross section of the Mal Tepe tomb and known location of basic find deposits in the building: A – tholos chamber; B1 and B2 – below the upper floor in the ante-chambers; C – in the corridor (adapted by JE after Рыцева 2000 with additions)

fill between the lower and the upper paved floors of the antechambers, Filov found cremated human remains and grave inventories (Филов 1937, 18-19, 29-30, 75-79); these were published as separate contexts in the light of their observed location (fig. 7/B1, B2). Particular emphasis is also laid on the fact, that “competent persons” investigated the graves below the upper floor in the ante-chambers in contrast to the circumstances of the original discovery of the Mal Tepe tomb (Филов 1937, 4-5; Filov 1937, 300, 302; Dimova 2010). This division according to the location of the artefacts and the reliability of information received concerning their provenance is reflected in the different approaches toward their context. The items from the “two intact cremation burials” are perceived as “unproblematic” and the later group received merely a summary, while the focus of attention is on the former as evidence of “earlier funeral ceremonial” (Filov 1937, 302).

After this brief overview of the story of the discoveries in Mal Tepe let us examine in detail the information about the chariot mounts. Despite the fact that “the exact location of these bronze items in the tomb can not be determined” Filov tried to “reconstruct” their original place by formal and functional analysis (Филов 1937, 21-22). He considered the pair of linchpins (fig. 4) as decoration of the bronze door at the entrance to the *tholos* chamber (Филов 1937, 22, обр. 23), while the “massive bronze ring with bended handle” (the fitting with the disk) (Филов 1937, 55, #15, обр. 52) (fig. 5) is tentatively recognized as part of candelabrum or “some device with similar use”. It is supposed “to had been (suspended) hanged on a handle with endings, resembling snake heads” (the bi-forked mount) (Филов 1937, 55-56, #16, обр. 53) (fig. 6) and attached to the walls of the *tholos* chamber or antechambers.

The “large quantity of lead” on the bi-forked mount is taken as additional hint to such interpretation, but Filov (Филов 1937, 56) was unable to prove his hypothesis and to determine the exact hole in the tomb walls where the object was “inserted”.

To define function and probable positioning of the “massive rings with balls” (bronze terrets or rein-rings) (Филов 1937, 61, 63, # 30, 31, обр. 69) (fig. 1-2) appeared to be no easier a task. General observations on their form resulted in the identification of the pairs of smaller

pieces as shaft rings of the bronze door at the entrance to the *tholos* chamber. The explorer of the Mal Tepe tomb tested his hypothesis and noticed considerable difference in dimensions, which were not in favour of such explanation. An alternative solution of the problem about the rings is his suggestion the items “belonged to some large wooden object, which had been destroyed and cannot now be reconstructed” (Филов 1937, 63). To the same direction points his hypothesis these rings were attached to “wooden frame or some sort of flat object” (Филов 1937, 61). As to the suggestion that we are dealing with the rein-rings of a chariot, this can still be considered as valid as well as Filov’s conclusion about the difficulties in reconstructing the position and the original arrangement of the items (Schönfelder 2002, 270, 393).

DECORATED FITTINGS ON TOMB WALLS OR IRON PARTS OF A DISMANTLED CHARIOT ABOVE A *KLINE*?

The initial proposition about hanging some of the bronze mounts on the Mal Tepe tomb walls deserves attention even if their primary functional definition has been re-evaluated in later studies. A short remark in Filov’s description of the *tholos* chamber contains information about several “large iron nails, discovered in the walls at human height, which had been used for suspension of objects” (Филов 1937, 20-21). Three years earlier the archaeologist proposed a similar explanation about large iron nails on the inner walls of the Rozovets monumental tomb and mentioned the discoveries near Mezek as example of hanging funeral paraphernalia on iron nails or hooks². Reference to the late second century BC *Heroon* at Calydon with iron clamps, pinned in every one of the four stone walls of the subterranean burial crypt (Dyggve et al. 1934, 99-100) does not provide a clear solution of the problem, but analogies to representations of weaponry and drinking equipment, hung on the walls as depicted in Hellenistic frescoes point to real-life inspiration for these images in sepulchral contexts (Dyggve et al. 1934, 105, Abb. 114-115).

The list of monumental grave structures in Southern Thrace dated to the Early Hellenistic period with iron fittings on their inner walls is complemented by the famous Kazanlak tomb with frescoes in the Tulbe tumulus and the Tomb of the Griffin in the same region. V. Mikov noted remains of two “pairs of iron hooks”, located on each side wall of the Kazanlak *dromos* (Миков 1954, 2) but their exact function cannot be determined (Русева 2002, 57). Kitov however is in favour of a “ritual” explanation of the nails as he is convinced these were used either to hang the costume of the participants in mystery cults taking place with the tomb or for suspension of lamps, curtains or decorative textiles on the walls (Китов 2003a, 36; 2005, 15).

The uncertainty, which still surrounds these examples is in contrast to the recorded use of iron nails as fasteners and elements of wooden construction in tomb architecture (Стоянова 2002, 67-71). Examples of iron nails and hooks in Mal Tepe, Rozovets and the tombs near Kazanlak form a separate group, which leaves an overall impression to be related to deposition of grave goods on the inner walls of the monuments, rather than the use of nails in the primary construction phases.

In the light of recent historical scenarios about the chariot mounts in Mal Tepe as trophies deposited in the tomb³ it is an attractive op-

² Филов 1934, 160; see the recent re-examination of the Rozovets tomb by Theodossiev 2005, 678.

³ Latest reviews in Stoyanov 2005, 127; 2010, 115 and Anastassov et al. forthcoming.

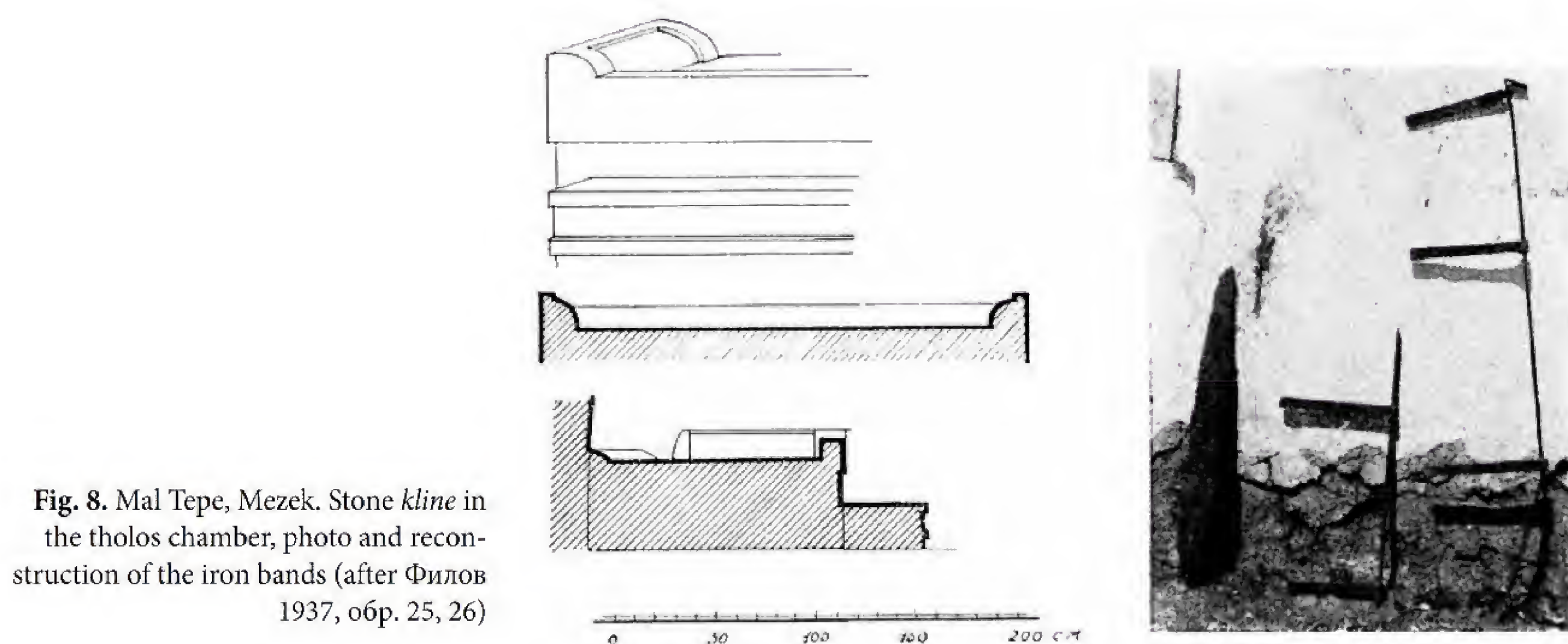


Fig. 8. Mal Tepe, Mezek. Stone *kline* in the tholos chamber, photo and reconstruction of the iron bands (after Филлов 1937, обр. 25, 26)

tion to suggest the iron nails in the *tholos* chamber as probable or at least an appropriate place for display of decorated fittings as the spoils of war. The proposition that these objects may have been suspended on the stone walls however remains equally conjectural whether one follows Filov's earlier hypothesis or the latest attempt by Kitov to find both practical and ritual explanations of the nails. Discovery of chariot mounts in the interior space of Mal Tepe tomb is still without available comparanda in the archaeological data from the eastern Balkans which could support or reject different variants for reconstruction of their final arrangement in the early Hellenistic tomb, prior to modern entry into the building.

An unusual find discovered on the stone *kline* of the *tholos* chamber raises additional questions related to the problem of how were the chariot pieces deposited in the monumental structure. Two large pieces of iron band with a horizontal and vertical bars are reported and illustrated as an iron fence ("Eisenschranke"), located over the *kline* (Филлов 1937, 24, обр. 25, 26). These items were removed from the tomb by the local residents and transferred to Mezek County Chambers, where Filov had the opportunity to examine them and to photograph the surviving pieces. According to information about their findspot the explorer of Mal Tepe assumed the iron bands were constructive element or decoration, attached to the stone *kline*. Comparison between the preserved length of the fragments (211 cm in total) and the length of the stone *kline* (240 cm) however reveals considerable difference in dimensions. The attempt at reconstruction of the original design of the *kline* faces another problem due to lack of holes on its slabs where the vertical bands of the "iron fence" could be inserted (Филлов 1937, 24). In a short article on the Mal Tepe discoveries – the first in English – one finds the following statement: "to the edge of the coffin-rest was fixed a single iron bar, still preserved in its entirety" (Filov 1937, 301). Readers of the investigation report in Bulgarian, published in the same year, were presented with a slightly different and detailed version on the matter: "it was impossible to determine how the fence had been attached over the bed. ... Therefore, it seems [the fence] was simply (sic) positioned at the edge of the bed" (Филлов 1937, 24).

In spite of these shortcomings in analysis and the growing number of funeral beds executed in marble, stone or bricks, discovered after the

Mal Tepe publication in Thracian Late Classical and Early Hellenistic monumental tombs (including some examples with elaborately carved pillows and cushions⁴), Filov's interpretation of the iron "fence" on the stone *kline* continues to escape the scrutiny of modern scholarship. His assumption that "the coffin-rest stood empty" (Filov 1937, 301) was reiterated in later studies of the tomb and focused attention on the fact "there were no remains of a body or other traces of burial in the round chamber" (Venedikov 1998, 72). The presence of a stone funerary bed in the *tholos* chamber is considered as a strong indicator for an inhumation burial, although such a correlation can hardly be accepted, regarding the circumstances of the Mal Tepe discovery. The funeral bed itself is devoid of elaborate sculptured or painted decoration like the finest examples in stone from Ostrusha tomb (Китов 1994, 14; Valeva 2005, 12, fig. 4), from the Tomb of the Griffin (Kitov 1999, 17-18, fig. 22; 2003, 17-18) and the marble *kline* in the tomb near Naip (Delemen 2006, 256, fig. 5, 6), all of which evoke direct analogies to the furnished interiors of the Macedonian tombs or contemporary Hellenistic houses (Andrianou 2006, 232-250; 2009, 31-50 with op. cit.).

The lack of any parallels for the iron "fence" on the *kline* is not a compelling argument against Filov's hypothesis, but it remains unclear what purpose could be served by a barrier installed over the funeral bed. Accepting the reconstruction in the excavation report as trustworthy (fig. 8) Kitov (2005, 15) proposed a ceremonial explanation for the fence. In line with his interpretation of the monumental structures in Late Iron Age tumuli as temples Kitov (2003a, 35-36) also tried to redefine the function of the couches in the tombs from "funerary" to "ritual" and mentioned the iron barrier from Mal Tepe in support of the latter assumption⁵. An antithesis between "ritual" beds and their burial function also seems to ignore an old, but still valid observation about couches in a mortuary context "to be those on which the dead recline at their funerary banquets, and [...] not merely the bed on which they sleep the everlasting sleep of death" (Tomlinson 1974, 249-150). After such a poetic description it is appropriate to recall the comment of C. F. C Hawkes (1947, 197) on the method used by Jacobsthal to recognize the chariot elements among the Mal Tepe finds: "the evidently Celtic burial in the Thracian *tholos-tomb* in Mezek was unhappily not separable in excavation from the accompaniments of its other burials", but the "belongings [of the Celt] display the Plastic Style". These lines clearly explain the basis of the hypothesis about the "Celtic" burial in the monumental building and raise suspicions as to whether more pieces without distinctive stylistic features such as the iron bands on the *kline* or a pair of flat bronze rings with central ribs (fig. 9) discovered in the *dromos* (Филов 1937, 65-66, #36, обр. 70) could not have also belonged to the dismantled chariot (Stoyanov 2010, 116), deposited "*pars pro toto*" at various places in the interior of the Mal Tepe tomb (fig. 7/A, C).

PROBLEMS OF DATING AND HISTORICAL SCENARIOS (FIG. 10)

As it has been demonstrated above, the attempt to answer the essential contextual questions "where" and "how" has provided multiple and inconclusive results which should be taken into account in any discussion of "when" and "why" the chariot elements should be found



Fig. 9. Mal Tepe, Mezek. Bronze ring from the corridor (after Филов 1937, обр. 71)

⁴ See discussion in Иванов 2006, 133-135 and Delemen 2004, 27-34; 2006, 256-257.

⁵ For the latest critique of the various interpretations see Рабаджиев 2011, 49-51; 2011a, 25-26.

Fig. 10. Table with comparison between the suggested dating of find deposits in the tomb according to different authors. All dates are BC

	A	B1, B2	C
Filov (1937; 1937a)	350 BC	333-300 BC	
Jacobsthal (1944)		post 280 BC	
Venedikov (1973; 1998)	359-340 BC	330-300 BC	
Domaradzki (1984; 1988; 1998)	325-300 BC	285-275 BC	250 BC
Gebhard (1989)		325-300 BC	
Pfrommer (1990)		post 250 BC	
Fol (1991)	320-300 BC		post 279 BC
Archibald (1998)	325-300 BC	post 300 BC	279-250 BC
Tonkova (1997; 2008)	325-290 BC	310-290 BC	275-250 BC
Stoyanov (2005; 2010; forthcoming)	287 BC	post 287 BC	277-250 BC

in the Early Hellenistic tomb. Once again it is worth to repeat Filov's general conclusion about the finds discovered above the upper paved floor in Mal Tepe: "it was not possible to determine whether the objects found belonged to the original burial or a later one" (Filov 1937, 302) – hardly an optimistic starting point for any further reconsideration on the subject.

In this respect the absolute dating of the burial sequence in the Mal Tepe tomb relies heavily on defining chronological indicators among the items from the secondary cremation graves between the paved floors in the ante-chambers (Филов 1937, 75-79) as well as objects with known find-spots amongst the group of finds discovered above the upper paved floor, which could provide hints about the temporal range of numerous activities within the structure. Following the same principle, Filov suggested the last third of the fourth century BC as a probable date for the secondary graves in the ante-chambers (Филов 1937, 90; Filov 1937, 302); this was based on two silver drachmae of Alexander the Great. The first half of the same century or about 350 BC "at the latest" was assumed for the erection of the *tholos tomb*, "the earlier funeral ceremonial" on the *kline* and the burials in the stone chests⁶. Multiple transformations of the monument reflected in major structural changes such as additions to the *dromos*, *krepis* and upper paved floor as well as what is known of the unusual distribution of the finds support the idea of Mal Tepe as a family tomb which was used repeatedly for several generations.

Less than a decade after Filov's meticulous report of discoveries in the vicinity of Mezek Jacobsthal (1944, 152, see further p. 14-16 below) extended the time-span of the Mal Tepe tomb to the middle of the third century BC "rediscovering" the chariot fittings in "Plastic style" among the finds and introducing into the equation the historical date of the Celtic migrations to Thrace in the end of the first quarter of the third century BC as a terminus post quem for a chariot burial in the *dromos*.

The value of the bronze mounts as chronological indicators is recognized even by Venedikov (1998, 72-73) who expressed sceptical comments on their "Plastic style" definition and proposed evolutionary rather than diffusionist or migrationist explanations of these items in following his middle fourth century BC historic dating generally on the grounds of Filov's phases of the tomb's use (Венедиков / Герасимов 1973, 68-70; Venedikov 1978; critique in Megaw 2004;

⁶ For a detailed discussion, see Stoyanov 2005, Tzochetv forthcoming, and Stoyanov / Stoyanova forthcoming.

2005, 213; Stoyanov 2005, 127). In the same vein is the statement: “if the Mal Tepe yoke ornaments were indeed made by the Celts, they would have to be dated to a period after the Celtic settlement of Thrace in 279 BC. However, if the ornaments are Thracian, they would be from an earlier period” (Venedikov 1998, 73). The reason for these stylistic, chronological and above all “ethnic” doubts as to the “Celtic” items lies in an attempt to identify “the ruler, buried in the Mezek tomb” with representatives of the Odrysian royal line at the time of Philip II (359-336 BC) and his military campaigns in the *Hebros* valley. The view that monumental tombs in ancient Thrace were “always reserved for the burial of kings” (Venedikov 1998, 83) in combination with the paradigm of foreign invasions and their catastrophic impact on political and cultural development of the local communities in the eastern Balkans (further comments in Theodossiev) leaves almost no room for “Celtic” chariot fittings in a “pristine” Thracian tomb such as the one in the Mal Tepe tumulus.

In support of the “Thracian” interpretation and an earlier dating of the chariot mounts to the fourth century BC Venedikov tried to establish a functional correlation between tomb plan and finds in the Mal Tepe complex. He claimed the ante-chambers were initially intended as places for the horse and the chariot of the ruler, who was buried in the *tholos* chamber, but later reconstructions and looting during periods of crisis resulted in relocation of the items in the tomb (Венедиков / Герасимов 1973, 68; Venedikov 1998, 83). Close interrelation between historical explanation and the suggested dating of archaeological material is also evident in Venedikov’s final conclusion that “a number of other fourth-century-BC burials, including one of a horse and chariot” were discovered “outside the tomb’s entrance” (that is, inside the corridor and the ante-chambers) (Venedikov 1998, 73). There is no doubt the bronze mounts belonged to a chariot, but Jacobsthal’s point about the “Celtic” burial – in the *dromos* – is adapted to Filov’s chronological framework and the assumption of the Mal Tepe tomb as the burial place of the Odrysian royal family in the turbulent times of the Macedonian conquest. The “Thracian” hypothesis about the origin of the bronze mounts is abandoned in later studies⁷, but their dating and place in the burial sequence in Mal Tepe has remained a matter of debate.

The riddle of “Plastic style” chariot fittings in one of the most representative “Thracian” tombs is a major topic in Mieczysław Domaradzki’s research on the Celts and La Tène finds in Thrace since the start of his investigations in the Eastern Balkans (Domaradzki 1976, 32-33; 1980, 461-463; Домарадски 1983; 1984, 125-126). Various aspects of the issue are explored in his attempt for analysis and refined dating of Late Iron Age rich burials in the region (Домарадски 1988; 1998, 44-64). Several formal and typological criteria provide a basis for comparison of the grave structures and definition of five successive horizons of rich burials in Thrace from the end of the sixth to the first century BC which indicate the emergence of local and regional centres of power, social stratification process as well as significant temporal changes in the selection of status markers deposited in the grave inventories.

Examination of the finds from the Mal Tepe tomb reveal not only an example of rich burials in the tumulus group near Mezek, but also

⁷ See discussion in Megaw 2005.

an extraordinary case of several consecutive rich burials located in different parts of the tomb interior (**fig. 7**). By cluster analysis, seriation and analogies of the bronze vessels and the breast-plate discovered in the *tholos* chamber, Domaradzki attributed these items to a primary grave (**fig. 7/A**) and placed its terminus post quem in the last quarter of the fourth century BC (Домарадски 1998, 50-53), which corresponds to the time of transition between the second (375-325 BC) and the third horizon (325/300-250 BC) of rich burials in Thrace, according to his chronological system. The secondary graves in the ante-chambers (**fig. 7/B1-B2**) are dated to the end of the first quarter of the third century BC and belong to the third horizon. In addition to these phases of tomb use and modification in dating of the “earlier funeral ceremonial” and of the assemblages under the upper paved floor Domaradzki interpreted the finds from a known location in the long corridor in Mal Tepe (**fig. 7/C**) as representing a grave (Домарадски 1998, 51) which otherwise had remained unrecognised in earlier studies. The inventory of this presumed burial includes a silver “Thracian” type brooch and spur, bronze askos and lamp as well as gold and bronze horse harness adornments (Филов 1937, 30-31, 56-57, 61, 65-66, 72, # 1, 2, 19, 20, 27, 35, 38, 42, 44, обр. 27, 28, 57, 58, 67, 70, 74). It is dated to the middle of the third century BC on the grounds of horse harness analogies (Tonkova 1997, 28-29; 2010, 57-59), spur distribution in the region (Stoyanov 2003, 200) and the value of the bronze mounts from Mezek as chronological indicators in line with Jacobsthal’s conclusions about “Plastic style” objects and the supposed “Celtic burial” in the *dromos* of the tomb.

If, despite the earlier scenario offered by Gebhard (1989a, 126-127), the answer of the question “when” the chariot fittings were deposited in Mal Tepe once again points to the second quarter of the third century BC and after the Celtic raids in Southern Thrace, the results of the other troublesome query, “why”, do not coincide with Jacobsthal’s explanation. Domaradzki considered the “burial in corridor” as “most probably a Thracian dynast (king) laid in his family tomb”, while the “Celtic” chariot was “a diplomatic gift or booty sized by the Thracians” (Домарадски 1984, 125-126; 1998, 51).

Detailed analysis of the items from Mal Tepe as well as temporal and spatial reconstruction of the burial sequence in the tomb suggested by Domaradzki (Домарадски 1998, 50-53) seems persuasive, but re-evaluation of several basic elements in his account casts doubt on the latest fixed point of “the rhythm of burial activity” in the tomb. The idea of a burial in the corridor is based on an assumption of similarity between the content of the secondary grave inventories under the upper floor in the ante-chambers (**fig. 7/B1-B2**) and the finds from the *dromos* (**fig. 7/C**). However, finding correlations in order to substantiate such a conclusion is a difficult if not impossible task. The assemblages of the former group located between the superimposed floors consist mainly of various jewellery items (golden necklaces, earrings, buttons, elements of wreaths (Филов 1937, 75-79)), while the latter group contains just a single object related to costume and personal adornments – a silver brooch. Another significant difference is the predominance of horse harness elements among the finds from the *dromos* and total absence of such items with the remains of the cre-

mations in the ante-chambers. There is indeed close resemblance in manufacture techniques between the gold horse-harness mounts and personal adornments (Tonkova 1997, 28; Stoyanov 2010, 116-117), but these features do not support the explanation of the finds from the corridor as representing a grave inventory. Furthermore, when eight decades ago Filov and Velkov entered the *dromos* of Mal Tepe tomb it had been already completely cleaned out by the villagers, who reported “a lot of equine bones and teeth there, which could not be preserved due to their condition” (Филов 1937, 4). In terms of a zonal reconstruction of the activities in the building this evidence for horse bones and the location of horse equipment at both ends of the corridor do not suggest a secondary grave of a “Celt leader or of a person closely connected with the Celts”⁸ nor of a “Thracian” noble, but rather the common practice of “horse sacrifice” marked in the corridor or in front of similar monuments in the eastern Balkans, a feature which is related to the end of their use (Китов 2003; 2003a, 37; Кузманов 2005; Kouzmanov 2005 with op. cit.).

Reviewing the analogies of the horse-harness mounts (Tonkova 1997, 28 with op. cit.; 2010; Stoyanov 2010, 117) and the value of the silver spur (Stoyanov 2003; Атанасов 2006) as a chronological indicator confirms a broader time frame for the last activities in the tomb interior in the first half of the third century BC. The fixed point in the middle of the same century proposed by Domaradzki (Домарадски 1998, 53) is a result of the identification of Mal Tepe as a “family tomb” and his attempt to establish direct correlation between rich burials in the building with several successive generations of the elite. The previous phase is set in the end of the first quarter of the third century BC or at a similar interval “of one generation” between the initial burial in the *tholos* and the latest “grave” in the *dromos* outlining both spatial and temporal dimensions of the model, but in contrast to Pfrommer’s (1990, 250) ex cathedra statement: “Anlage des Brandbestattungen nicht vor dem mittleren 3. Jh”.

The danger of chronological conclusions following “a firm belief in a rigid line of development of shapes and forms” (Miller 1993a) however is relevant not only to Pfrommer’s approach to Hellenistic jewellery and to his dating of the secondary burials in the Mal Tepe ante-chambers. Personal adornments in “Greek style” among the grave finds are considered as main distinctive features of the third horizon of rich burials in Thrace (325/300-250 BC) and markers of changing fashions under strong Hellenistic influence (Домарадски 1998, 46), but it is questionable if the ornaments in the layer between the paved floors (**fig. 7/B1-B2**) could provide a true chronological fixed point for the “secondary” burials in Mal Tepe ante-chambers and a reliable terminus post quem for deposition of the chariot fittings into the tomb⁹. Taking into account various options for processual explanation of the assemblages under the upper paved floor makes it even more difficult to support the Domaradzki’s scheme for definition of time intervals between successive generations laid in the “family” burial place. Against his concept of regular recurrence in the “rhythm of burial activity” with direct repercussions in the archaeological record goes the evidence for reburial into the ante-chambers from the original content of the stone chests in the *tholos*, discovered empty after the

⁸ Contra Bouzek 2005, 97; 2005a, 106 and Emilov 2007, 53.

⁹ See discussion on the “female graves” in Tzochet forthcoming.

last using of the tomb (Филов 1937, 25-30; Tzochev forthcoming with additional argumentation). In the same line of enquiry is the opinion of Venedikov, who supposed full transferring of the grave inventory out of the building during the reconstruction phase and new allocation of the items in the interior as soon as the monument had been redesigned (Венедиков / Герасимов 1973, 70).

On a basis of analysis on the Thasian storage amphora as the most chronologically sensitive artefacts among the finds from the tomb Chavdar Tzochev now suggests a reappraisal on the sequence and the time-span of burial activities in Mal Tepe (Tzochev forthcoming). His attempt for synchronization between the deposition of already old Thasian amphora located over empty stone chest in the *tholos* chamber and the La Tène chariot fittings points again to the third decade of the third century BC at the time or just a few years after the “Celtic” raids in Southern Thrace as recorded in the ancient written sources. Whether these jars once belonged to grave goods of the initial internment in the structure (Stoyanov / Stoyanova forthcoming), or that they were placed in the *tholos* chamber after the reconstruction and reburial phase together with some parts of the captured “Celtic” chariot is another open question in the Mal Tepe puzzle. Following the line of reference to the chronology of Thasian stamps, it is worth paying attention to the fact that golden horse-harness mounts similar to the finds from Mal Tepe *dromos* were discovered in tumulus 3 near Kralevo associated with amphora, dated to ca. 270 BC (Гинев 2000, 29-33; Tonkova 2010, 53-54; Tzochev 2009, 66, tab. 3; Маджаров 2011, 245 note 18 with op. cit.).

In comparison to earlier interpretations of the “Plastic style” mounts from Mal Tepe as grave goods associated to isolated “burial in corridor” Tzochev (forthcoming) takes a holistic functional approach and relates their deposition to finds with various spatial arrangement in the structure. Reconsidering the evidence for Filov’s definition of “earlier funeral ceremonial” confined to the *tholos* chamber as well as the multiple issues, concerning the assemblage(s) in the *dromos* leads to suggestion that the finds above the upper floor level represent later grave of “a local leader buried with his arms, horse, dining set, and somewhat unusual war-trophies” (Tzochev forthcoming). As it has been demonstrated above we share similar doubts “on the need to look for a burial in the corridor” and argue for chariot pieces, deposited at several places in Mal Tepe interior. The explanation for multiple transformations in the tomb as concomitant events to presumed elite burial however is difficult to follow. Unfortunately if “the problematic third phase” is entirely eliminated due to our current limitations to find narrow chronological indicators among the finds from the other compartments of the tomb, comparable to the Aegean pottery imports in the *tholos* chamber, we are not getting closer to solution of the Mal Tepe puzzle in understanding the variety of motivations and circumstances, which shaped the changes in monument design and function. Beyond any doubt the remains of “horse sacrifice(s)” in the corridor marked the end of the activities in the interior of the tomb, but reconstructions and deposits in front of the tomb entrance as well as setting there of the bronze statue of a boar (statuary group?) (Stoyanov 2005) raise numerous questions without answers on the temporal dimen-

sions of the “the problematic third phase” and its relation to the graves inside the building.

In summary, concerning the date of deposition of the “Disney” style chariot mounts among the objects in Mal Tepe, it is still difficult to link these finds to separate grave inventories in the edifice. Re-examination of the tomb history however suggests re-burial of cremated remains in the ante-chambers and “horse sacrifices” in corridor rather than successive burials of several generations in a family tomb. Parts of a dismantled chariot together with distinctive “Disney” style mounts were probably inserted into the round chamber and the *dromos* during final reconstruction of the edifice and of the mound into a *heroon* sometimes in the second quarter of the third century, which makes the historic explanation of the items as spoils of war after the Antigonos Gonatas victory over the Celts near Lysimachia (277 BC) an attractive scenario.

JE

THE LA TÈNE METALWORK

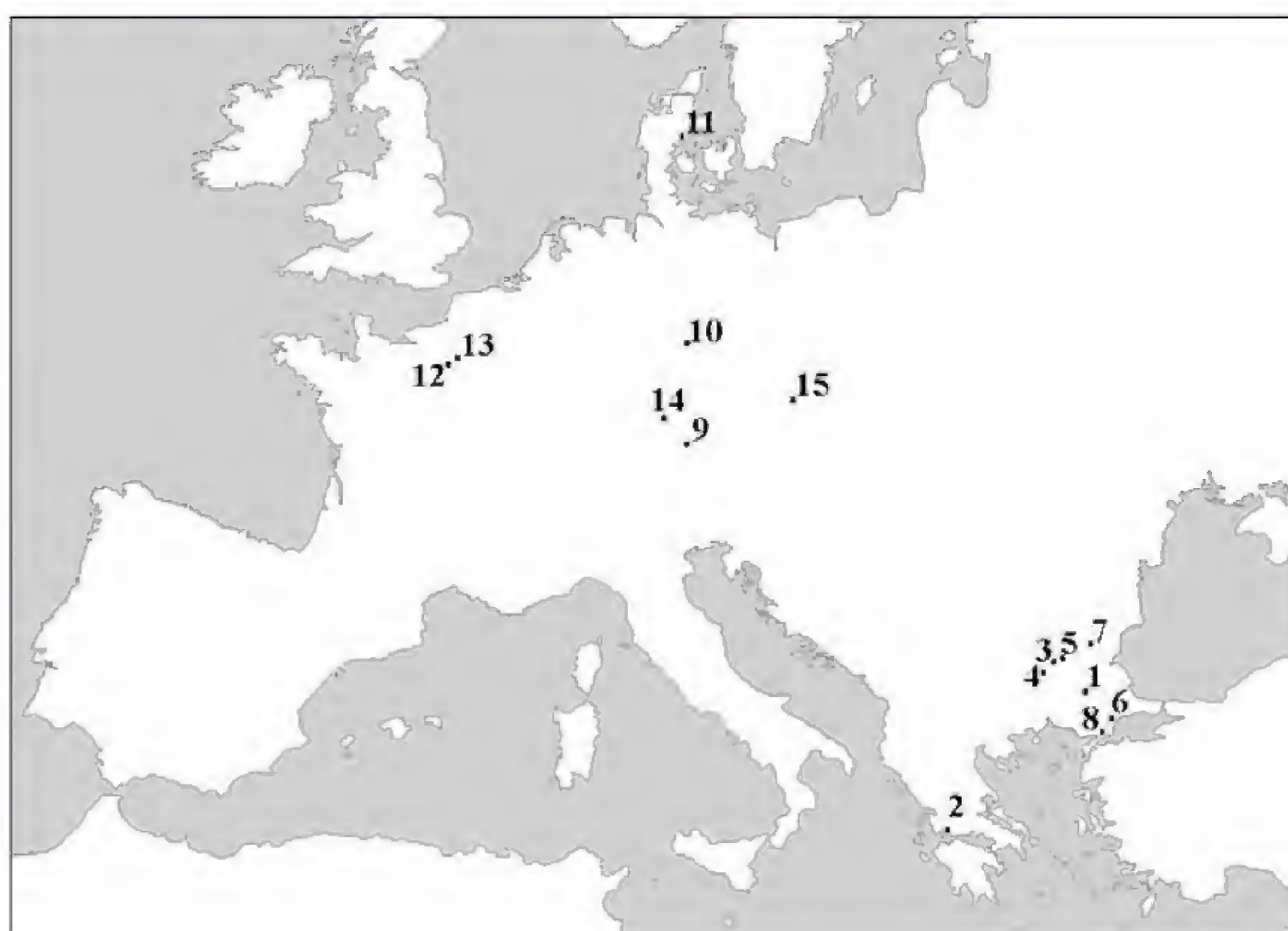
Turning to consider the “Celtic” bronzes in greater detail, it was Paul Jacobsthal who in publishing illustrations of the boar and three other bronzes in 1940 first drew attention to their significance – repeating his earlier comments written in 1938 which were included in his *Early Celtic art* when he was unsure whether his original publication would ever appear (Jacobsthal 1944, 151-152, # 164 and 179); he also followed the erroneous interpretation that they were evidence for a Celtic chariot burial having been inserted into the *dromos* (See more recently Fol 1991, 184). Jacobsthal considered the boar figure (Jacobsthal 1944, pl. 260g; see most recently Stoyanov 2010, 117) to have been provincial work possibly removed by Gaulish trophy-hunters from a larger group.

Despite the bronzes having been frequently illustrated (See for example Venedikov 1976, # 382-386; Venedikov 1979, # 383-387; Fol / Egami 1979, # 383-387; Prévost 1987, # 465-469), notably in the series of major touring exhibitions of Thracian gold which, in the 1980s and '90s traversed the globe from Japan to Canada and in 2012 will be seen in Stuttgart as part of *Die Welt der Kelten*, this is the first occasion that a complete catalogue of them has been made available.

The pieces, totally cast in bronze and all now in the National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Sofia, currently comprise some ten objects. It should be noted that the list does not include pieces which clearly do not form part of the La Tène assemblage; an example is the rectangular bronze buckle surprisingly included by Jacobsthal (1944, 151) with the chariot fittings as “Celtic”. As Stoyanov (2010, 117 and fig. 1/10) convincingly demonstrates, there is nothing Celtic about this piece which is in fact a common type amongst Thracian horse trappings of the Classical and Hellenistic period and as such may have something to do with the evidence of horse sacrifice in the Mal Tepe mound. To be placed in the same category are the three large rings with tongue fastenings (*Steckverschluss*) published by Kull (Kull 1996, 430 and Abb. 8/3; Филов 1937, #37) in the context of bit- and related harness-types from the Carpathians (see also Schönfelder 2002, 372). Again this is not the place to pursue the discussion as to how many sets of fittings are represented here; Schönfelder bases his argument on three rings while Filov in fact mentions four. As to the La Tène fit-

Fig. 11. Map of sites and finds mentioned in the text:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Mezek | 10. Kalefeld |
| 2. Calydon | 11. Brå |
| 3. Kazanlak | 12. Paris |
| 4. Rozovets | 13. "La Fosse |
| 5. Dolno | Cotharet", |
| Izvorovo | Roissy-en- |
| 6. Naip | France |
| 7. Kralevo | 14. Manching |
| 8. Lysimachia | 15. Brno- |
| 9. Poing | Maloměřice |



things there seems no argument against all pieces – with the possible exception of #6 – having originally formed part of a single chariot and to have been made in the same workshop.

1. Four “rein-rings” each with a stylised human face (ultimately based on the palmette) forming an open “U” shape mounting presumably to attach them to the yoke. Three of them are illustrated on **fig. 1/a-c**, while the fourth (**fig. 2** lower left) is now lacking its decorative element. NAIM inv. 6411-12. Diam. 73 mm, thickness 29 mm. Филов 1937, #30; Stoyanov 2010, fig. 1/1-3, 5.
2. One larger “rein-ring”. NAIM inv. 6411 (**fig. 1d**). Diam. 84 mm, width 33 mm. Филов 1937, #31; Stoyanov 2010, fig. 4.
3. Circular mount with opposing palmette faces (**fig. 3**), now attached to the larger “rein-ring” (**fig. 1d**). Diam. 84 mm, thickness 33 mm. Филов 1937, #31. Venedikov 1978, fig. 3.

Filov makes it clear that originally all five rings were complete. A photograph of the five rings taken before the 1970s restoration shows the broken larger ring with the mount beside it (**fig. 2**)¹⁰.

- 4a-b. Pair of linch-pins, heads in bronze with shafts in iron, the surviving finial also being in bronze one face with knobbed pseudo-face heads with shafts in bronze decoration and plain backs. One is broken just above the end of the pin. NAIM inv. 6413 (**fig. 4a-b**). Max. height (a) 125 mm; (b) 121 mm. Филов 1937, #29; Stoyanov 2010, fig. 1/9 and 8.

The pair of linch-pins offers the strongest evidence at Mal Tepe for the presence of a two-wheeled chariot – or rather parts thereof – and form the easternmost examples of a distribution of linch-pins with rectangular heads which extends westwards to the Middle Rhine and Champagne (Megaw / Megaw 1995; Schönfelder 2002, esp. 165-171).

5. Composite curved attachment with at one end a cast-in ring and at the other a flat circular disc with an encircling edging of contiguous S-commas; the lower sec-

¹⁰ On earlier La Tène “rein-rings” (“Führungsringe”) in general see Schönfelder 2002, esp. 224-228 with Abb. 139/1 – where the Mezek piece is correctly shown with the ring uppermost.

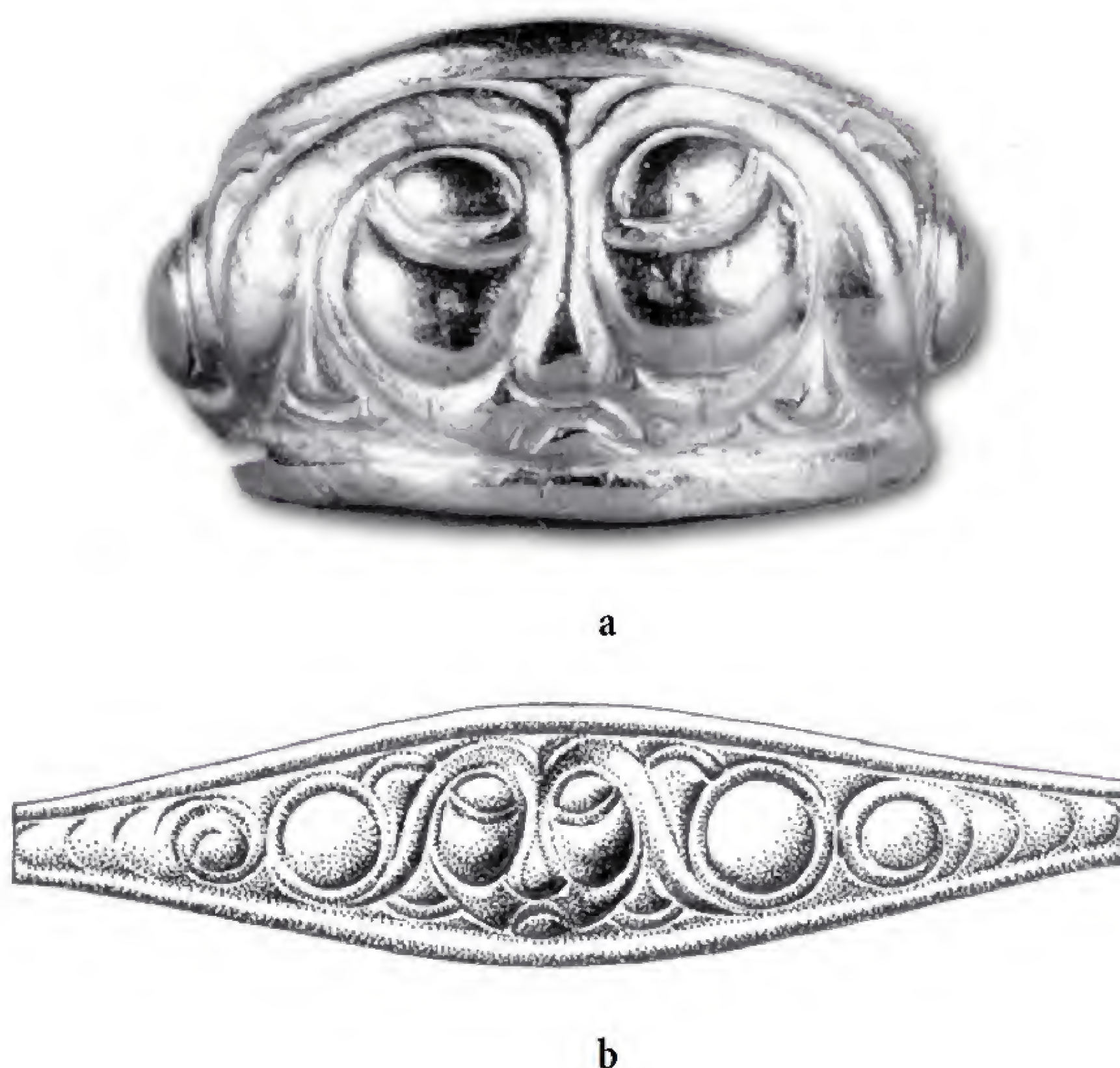


Fig. 12. “Sardinia”. Gold finger-ring. Diam. 25 mm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. **a** Photo: Crown copyright reserved; **b** drawing: P. R. Ward

tion is hollow and shares with the other bronzes similar large “eye” motifs. NAIM inv. 6413 (**fig. 5a-c**). Diam. of disc 103 mm Филов 1937, #15; Stoyanov 2010, fig. 1/6. The purpose of this piece is difficult to determine. Schönfelder (2002, 191-192 and Abb. 211) identifies amongst *Ösenknäufe* a similar class of object; these may possibly have been associated with attaching the body of the vehicle to parts of the traction.

The ornament around the rim of the disc is what Jacobsthal (1944, 69-70) termed “the running spiral”, a sub-set of the S-spiral, a series of linked and rimmed eyes.

6. Bi-forked rein-lead (?) with waterbird’s head terminals. NAIM inv. 6413 (**fig. 6**). Height 113 mm. Филов 1937, #16; Stoyanov 2010, fig. 1/7.

The forked mounting with birds’ heads (crested (?) grebe) seen in profile, despite the frequency of birds in Iron Age iconography, has few parallels known to us and when they do occur they are in much earlier or much later contexts. Amongst the former is a linch-pin from the Late Bronze Age wagon grave of Poing, Ldkr. Ebersberg (Winghart 1999) while later are the bird’s heads terminals on a wagon fitting from the third century AD battlefield site of Kalefeld, Ldkr. Northeim (Brock / Homann 2011, 50 and ill.). Closest in fact are the birds incised on the roundels of the bronze shield cover of the shield from the River Witham, Lincs (Megaw / Megaw 2001, ill. 337). Notwithstanding, the piece may with caution be included in the group of La Tène fittings.

STYLISTIC DISCUSSION (FIG. 11)

With the exception of two pieces, stylistically the Mezek bronzes have been frequently discussed – with varying degrees of usefulness – in a



Fig. 13. Brå, Horsens, Eastern Jutland.
a fragment of bronze and iron cauldron.
 Width of iron ring-handle c. 215 mm;
b detail of cast bovine fitting. Width
 between horns ca. 52 mm; **c-d** details
 of swingle mount in form of an owl.
 Width 44 mm. Forhistorisk Museum,
 Moesgaard. Photos: Lennart Larsen,
 National Museum, Denmark

number of publications since Jacobsthal, by the present author amongst others (Klindt-Jensen 1953, esp. 68; Megaw 1966, esp. 122-125, Abb. 4 and Taf. 9; Megaw 1970a, #170; Sandars 1985, 365-373; Megaw / Megaw 2001, 139-144 and ill. 212-227; Duval 2000, 167-169 and ill. 126-132; and most recently; Stoyanov 2010, esp. 115-116). These belong to a sub-set of what Jacobsthal (1944, 266-273) called his “Plastic style”. The most spectacular examples of what we first dubbed, many years ago, the “Disney style” (Megaw 1970b, 275, fig. 5/1 and pl. 30), come from very disparate locations and largely, but not exclusively, are associated with chariot fittings. All demonstrate a particular type of stylization of human as well as animal heads which, together with seemingly more “abstract” forms ultimately have evolved out of elements of the

more two-dimensional “Vegetal” or Waldalgesheim “style” (Megaw 1966, 125-134; Frey 1995). This abstraction of natural forms shares with modern film animators the ability to produce recognizable forms by the economic use of basic curvilinear elements. As with such well-known figures as Mickey Mouse or Asterix the Gaul and as viewed on cinema or television screens, divorced from the whole, no single detail is typical of an actual mouse or man but the total image is immediately identifiable. A further interpretation by Laurent Olivier and Philippe Charlier (2008) has recently suggested that our “Disney” group does not simply represent a cartoonist-like process of abstraction but rather a more meaningful approach to representing the human – including the grotesquely disfigured (**fig. 14b**) – and the inhuman. Examining the subtle differences in the faces of the Mal Tepe rein-rings – visible upside-down when mounted on the yoke (**fig. 1**) – it would be possible to fantasize that here were depictions of different characters representing differing emotions. There are, however, all too few examples in early La Tène art to support such an interpretation; from an earlier context are the reversible faces – youth (?) and old age, sorrow (?) and joy – from the rich but disturbed chariot burial of Bad Dürkheim, Kr. Bad Dürkheim first identified only some 150 years after the grave’s discovery (Megaw 1969). Another oddly naturalistic pair of faces forms one of the complex fittings from Brno-Maloměřice to be considered further in the following paragraphs (Meduna et al. 1992, Taf. 35/1; Čižmarová 2005, obr. 91/2). Certainly, all the Mal Tepe faces basically follow the “closed tendril” anthropomorphising of the human face from the classical palmette as I first argued many years ago in a “strip cartoon” commencing with a detail of an Apulian volute krater and ending with one of the finest of all “Disney” style pieces, a gold finger-ring, one of two early La Tène gold rings supposedly found in Sardinia (Megaw 1966, 122-125, Abb. 1/2 and 4; see also Megaw / Megaw 1995, esp. 142 and fig. 71) (**fig. 12**).

Be that as it may, where there is any indication of a dateable context, objects of the Disney style are – once more pace Gebhard (1989a, 126-127) – to be dated to roughly a century centred on the earlier part of the third century BC – La Tène B2-C1 – or more or less contemporary with the historically attested Celtic incursions into the Balkans and beyond. However, some of the very finest examples are isolated finds or without certain origin. Such are the bronze mounts for a bronze cauldron found in a pit at Brå near Horsens in Eastern Jutland (Klindt-Jensen 1953) (**fig. 13**) and the gold finger-ring said to have been found in Sardinia. There are, however, apart from Mezek two other finds of chariot fittings with better context. First is a set of bronze and iron fittings purchased in 1907 for what is now the Musée d’Archéologie at St.-Germain-en-Laye as having been found in the region of Paris. This ascription was doubted by Jacobsthal amongst others though there seems no reason now to question its discovery in the rue Tournefort (Schönfelder 2002, esp. A. Teil I #58; contra Jacobsthal 1944, #175) (**fig. 14**). A further find in north-eastern France was the result of rescue excavations in 1999-2000 at the site of extensions to Roissy-Charles de Gaulle Airport. These revealed a small but rich cemetery at “La Fosse Cotharet”, Roissy-en-France publication of which is ongoing (Lejars 2005) (**fig. 15**). Dated by the excavator to the begin-



a



b

Fig. 14. Paris. **a** fragmentary bronze and iron linch-pin, width 85 mm; **b** rein-ring or terret – bronze over iron, diam. 70 mm, Musée d’Archéologie Nationale, St-Germain-en-Laye. Photos: **a** Musée d’Archéologie Nationale; **b** Inge Kitlitschka-Strempel, Klosterneuburg

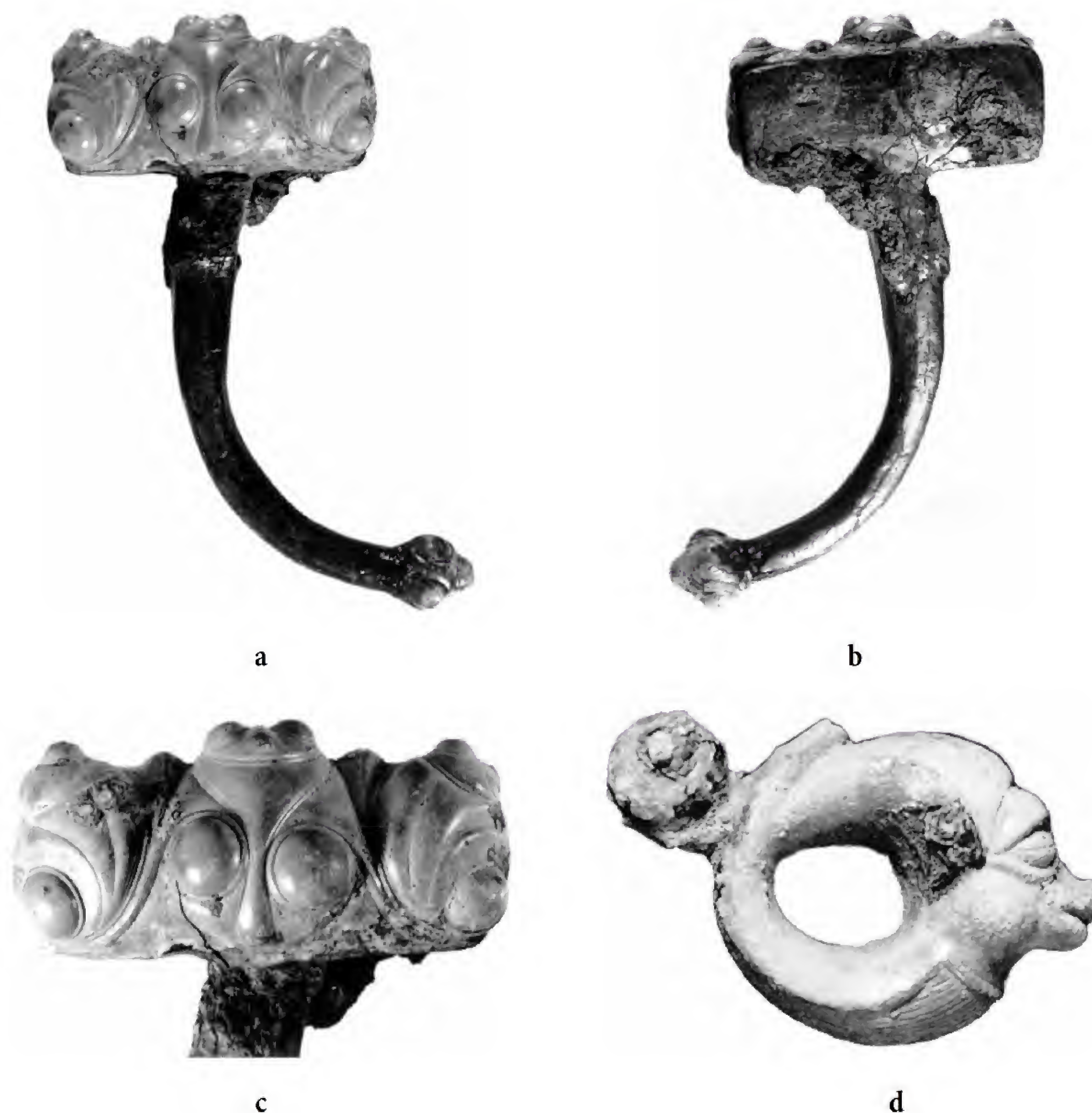


Fig. 15. “La Fosse Cotharet” Roissy-en-France, chariot grave 2; **a-b** one of a pair of bronze and iron linch-pins, total height 120 mm; **c** detail of head, width 65 mm; **d** one of a pair of bronze? rein-rings, diam. 32 mm, Musée d’Archéologie Nationale, St-Germain-en-Laye.

Photos: J. V. S. Megaw

ning of the third century BC (LT B2) two of the graves contained the remains of a chariot, and in one the fittings have points of resemblance not only with the Paris mounts but particularly with the linch-pins found at Mal Tepe (**fig. 4**).

The Brå cauldron mounts comprise the heads of bulls – or at least cattle – while they flank the handle mounts which are owls down the backs of which curls a low-relief tendril, a late version of the “Waldalgesheim” or “Vegetal” style; these possibly represent the Little Owl, *Athene noctua* (**fig. 13**) comparable with the bird’s heads on the top of another pair of linch-pins, from Manching, Ldkr. Pfaffenhofen (Krämer / Schubert 1979) (**fig. 16**). Found in a corner of an abandoned enclosure ditch, like the Brå cauldron the Manching linch-pins possibly represent ritual deposition since less than 50 m distant, remains of two wheels were discovered (Jacobi 1974, #1796; Lorenz 2004, 94-95). Despite the find also of late LT painted pottery and Middle LT wheel-turned wares in the general area (Gebhard 1989a, 44 and Anm. 143) the linch-pins must have been old when deposited. More specifically, the Manching birds may represent respectively the Eagle



Fig. 16. Manching, Kr. Pfaffenhofen: a-b details of pair of bronze and iron linch-pins; a with traces of “enamel” inlay, width c. 36 mm. Archäologisches Staatsammlung, Munich. Photos: J. Bahloo, Römisch-Germanische Kommission, Frankfurt a. M.

Owl (*Bubo bubo bubo*) and a falcon or kestrel (*Falco* sp.) (Megaw 1981, 141-142 and fig. 9). The addition of red “enamel” – strictly a vitreous paste – on the head of one of the linch-pins is very similar to that employed on a complex belt-chain from Manching-Steinbichel grave 37 (Krämer / Schubert 1979, 375 and Taf. 1/3; Krämer 1985, Taf. 23/1; Challet 1992, 85 and fig. 39/1: “LT C2”) suggesting perhaps the product of the same workshop (Gebhard in lit.).

It is still an open question as to what a degree the Disney style can strictly be regarded as a localised style or whether it should rather be regarded as similar responses by several disparate crafts-centres to the same artistic stimuli. Indeed, a sobering thought – it is by no means impossible to regard many of the works discussed here as the product of one workshop. Certainly, insofar as absolute dating may be applied to the group, this fits in with the historic mass movement of the Celts into the Balkans. The discovery in 1941 on the edge of a late 4th-early 3rd century BC flat cemetery at Brno-Maloměřice, “Plíže”, okr. Brno-venkov in Moravia of a number of openwork bronze mounts presumably for a spouted wooden flagon with animal, bird and human forms (Meduna et al. 1992; Čižmářová 2005) (fig. 17) has resulted in the locus for the style having been placed in Central Europe (Klindt-Jensen 1953, 67-73); a noticeable feature of the Brno mounts is the way in which grotesque animal, or rather bird’s heads appear at almost every turn. Another detail which links Brno (fig. 17f-g), Brå, Paris (the terret with “grotesque” faces: fig. 14b) and a pair of small terrets with curious little snouted heads from the second of the Roissy chariot graves (fig. 15d) is the parallel combed hair or main (see further below).

The argument for a Central European source for the “Disney” style might seem to be strengthened by the recent discovery in Moravia at Němčice nad Hanou, okr. Prostějov of a “Plastic” ornamented single-edged knife handle (Čižmář / Kruta 2011). The basic motif is the rimmed “eye” which is the trade-mark of many of the “Disney” group. The site, an important open settlement with evidence of glass-manufacture and coinage from a number of Mediterranean locations

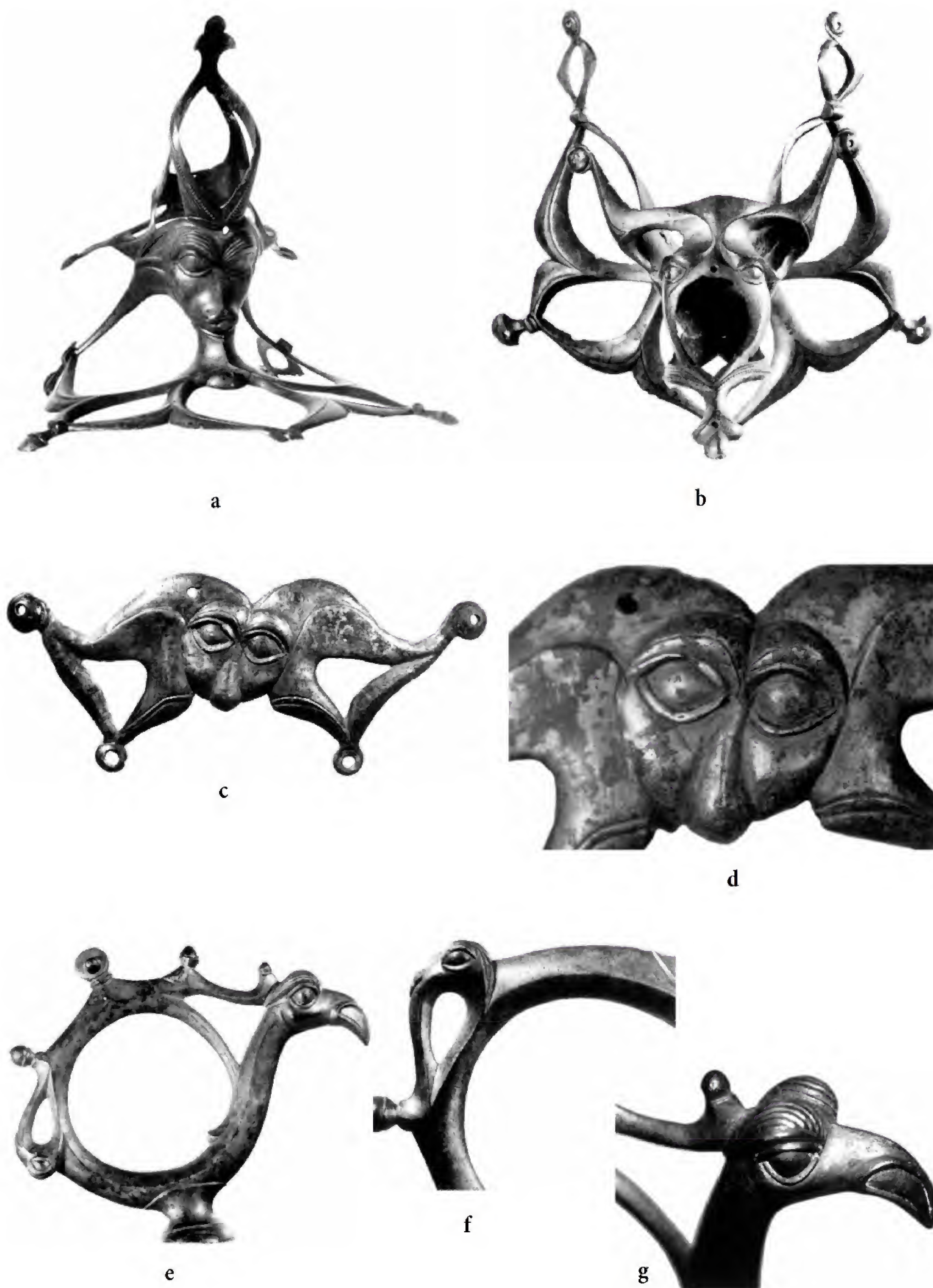


Fig. 17. Brno-Maloměřice, “Plíže”, okr. Brno-venkov. Bronze mounts probably from a spouted wooden flagon from a disturbed grave: **a-b** large mount fitting around spout, height ca. 12 mm; **c-d** mount, width 56 mm; **e-g** handle, max. width 115 mm. Moravské zemské muzeum, Brno. Photos: **d, f** J. V. S. Megaw; all others: Moravské zemské muzeum

contemporary with LT B2, would seem to support the argument – to which we shall return – of a date in the first half of the third century BC and the Balkan campaigns of 280 BC and after.

However, in view of the recent French evidence, the primacy of Central Europe is not entirely secure. Flemming Kaul (1995, 32-34), while suggesting that, as with the later Gundestrup cauldron found at Rævemosen (Aars), Brå may have been brought from Central Europe by returning Cimbri, also draws attention not only to technological similarities to the Manching linch-pins but also to a ring mount from the Bavarian *oppidum* which has been identified as a fragment of a Hellenistic hanging-lamp in the form of a peacock (Ernst Künzl in litt.; see Krämer / Schubert 1979, n. 25 citing Klindt-Jensen 1953, 19, 65 and fig. 11) one is tempted to think of the Hellenistic bronzes in the Mezek *tholos*.

That the Brno bronzes represent an astronomical chart of the heavens on the eve of Beltane, 14 June 280 BC as has been recently suggested (Kruta / Bertuzzi 2007), is intriguing if not believable. It is more pertinent to return to the topic of the rare occurrence in early La Tène art of “naturalistic” depictions of the human face. We have already observed that one of the Brno mounts depicts two opposing human heads is an extremely rare case in early Celtic iconography of a naturalistic, indeed portrait-like, depiction. Two other somewhat earlier examples are the head at the base of the handle of the spouted flagon from the “princess’s” chariot burial at Waldalgesheim, Kr. Kreuznach and the silver *Scheibenhalsring* supposedly from Mâcon (Saône-et-Loire) (Megaw 1967; compare Frey 1995, 238-239 and Taf. 35/1 and 32; Megaw / Megaw 2001, 101 and ill. 45 and 135). Nancy Sandars’ description of the Brno heads is of “two strikingly naturalistic human heads with contrasting expressions [which] could stand for genial and sardonic “humours” (Sandars 1985, 185, ill. 371). It would seem that the representational depiction of the human form must have had a powerful intent tantamount to running contrary to a virtual taboo. Despite the historical contacts with the Hellenistic world just noted, Gebhard’s suggestion that there is a good Hellenistic model for the Brno double “portraits” (Gebhard 1989b) also seems intrinsically unlikely.

Certainly there are close points of stylistic similarity between the far-flung distribution of the pieces we have been discussing and as is the case so often in studying early Celtic art it is the details which are significant. At the cruder level there are obvious similarities which now can be made between the linch-pins of “La Cotharet” and Mezek – closer than with the Paris example as previously cited (See for example Kramer / Schubert 1959, Abb. 3). A general feature is the treatment of the eyes, in each case a pointed oval with a bordering raised ridge (see for example fig. 12; 13b; 14; 17c-d). But more telling is the similarity in the treatment of the hair on all our Disney style group. In each case the fringe – or forelock – of the Brå cattle, the two small circular fittings from “La Fosse Cotharet” and the main bull’s head of the largest Brno mount and the grotesque Paris mount, is shown brushed back in a series of parallel strands. But it should be noted that neither of these features appear on the Mezek bronzes and claims of close association between them and the Paris mounts look less certain than

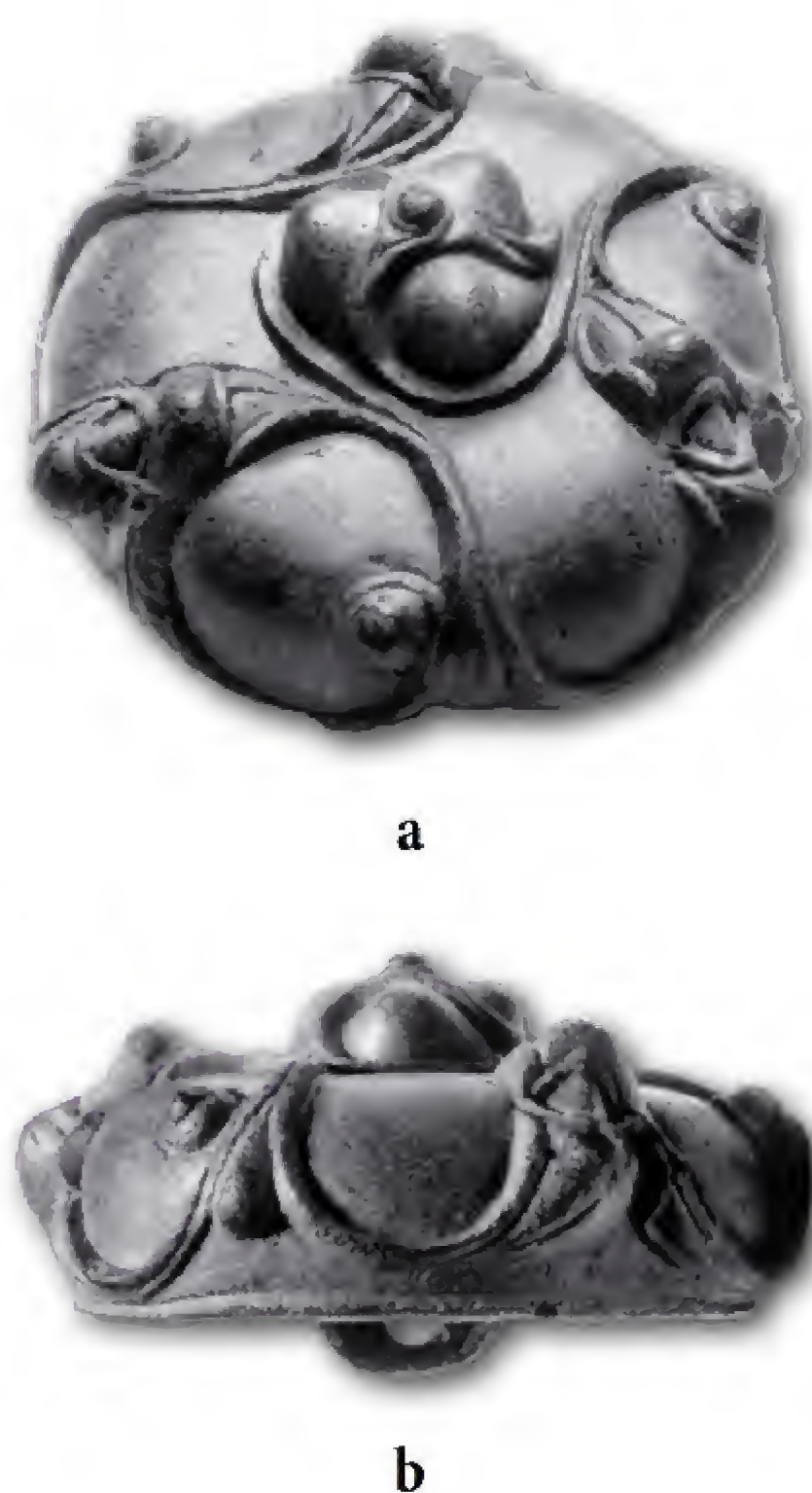


Fig. 18a-b. “Lower Danube”. Bronze mount (?), shield mount, diam. 35 mm. Private collection. Photos: Y. Hurni, Historisches Museum, Bern

when Jacobsthal first made them. At this juncture, one should recall the long-held belief in the itinerant nature of much fine La Tène metal-working (Megaw 1985, 167-172; most recently Modaressi-Tehrani 2009, chap. VIII). Add to this that such are the stylistic similarities of the Disney style that the question of the location of a centre of production is not easily answered. A more westerly ultimate source than has previously thought to be the case seems a distinct possibility; the little bronze handle with a fine bull's head reminiscent of both Maloměřice and Brå and supposedly from Mâcon may be significant here (Megaw 1962). On the other hand it is many years since Miklós Szabó first drew attention to the importance of Central and Eastern Europe in the development of the Plastic style (Szabó 1989). While there is no question as to Moravia's rôle in certain aspects of Jacobsthal's Plastic style, particularly with regard to the series of arm- and foot-rings found particularly there but also in southern Germany (Kruta 1975, 75-89), continued support for the region as the birthplace of our subgroup (Čižmář / Kruta 2011) is another matter. Unfortunately, historical sources are of no help in establishing a route from either eastern France or Central Europe to Thrace.

There are, however two other possible links between western and eastern Europe and the Hellenistic world. First is the well-known "warrior" grave in the cemetery of Ciumești, jud. Satu Mare (Rusu 1971; Rustoiu 2006; 2008b). Here certainly are all the attributes of a chieftain – the helmet with its articulated eagle which stylistically certainly does not look Celtic and probably was a secondary feature, the made-to-measure greaves (a product of a Hellenistic workshop) and the chainmail with its typically "Plastic" circular mount with its low relief triskele – once more reminiscent of elements of later sword-style. While classical sources ascribe the invention of chainmail to the Celts, the archaeological evidence is scattered spatially and chronologically (Rustoiu 2005, 49-52); more or less contemporary with Ciumești are the remains of chainmail from Kirkburn (Yorkshire) (Stead 1991, 54-56 and fig. 45) and Fluitenberg (Drente) (Van der Sanden 2003-2004; Wijnhoven 2010). To be sure, the image that Rustoiu paints of a well-travelled warrior returning home from leading a band of mercenaries in the eastern Mediterranean, is a tempting one. Be that as it may and noticing in passing other possible and earlier evidence for the last resting places of Gaulish mercenaries in the Balkans (Guštin et al. 2011) attention must be drawn to the recent publication of a circular bronze fitting purchased by a Swiss couple in Wiesbaden with a possible provenance in the Lower Danube (Müller 2011) (**fig. 18**). While the lack of any firm evidence as to find spot or association is unfortunate, as Müller notes, the bronze is clearly in the "Plastic" style; features of the Ciumești roundel can be seen particularly in its central triskel. Even more telling are the crested bird's heads with prominent oval eyes and down-curving bills which form the main elements of the design. These are very similar to the bird's heads which are to be found on several of the Brno-Maloměřice bronzes (cf. Meduna et al. 1992, Abb. 4, 5, 7, 9). Again, visions are conjured up that we might have here a relic of a grave of one of those warriors who failed to return from the Balkan wars and the pendulum might be thought to be once more swinging towards Central Europe as the homeland of our "Disney" style.

In conclusion, we must return to the question of the reasons for establishing dating and context of the Mezek bronzes and to offer yet again a range of possibilities. As to chronology, while some time around the middle of the third century BC for their deposition would, as just noted, be possible having consideration of the dating of the historically dated Gaulish incursions into the Balkans, a reliance on Mezek as a fixed chronological point would appear to be no longer so secure as it seemed to Jacobsthal (1944, 151-152). It is therefore highly problematic to place the “Plastic” style at the end of the fourth century BC as the result of dating the Mezek burial(s) in the last quarter of the same century – for which there is no firm evidence (See Gebhard 1989, 126-127). Secondly, as we have argued, there is no support for the theory that these chariot fittings were part of a complete chariot burial as repeated most recently, albeit with an element of doubt, by Schönfelder (2002, 372). We are not alone in our view – see the brief but even-handed discussion by Müller (2009). Barry Cunliffe (1997, 174-175) has summed up the problem. He asks, was the “chariot burial” that of “a Celtic chieftain, his lineage laying claim to territorial legitimacy by choosing an indigenous tomb for the interment, was the chariot a diplomatic gift from a Celt to a Thracian, or was it a Celtic chariot captured by a Thracian?” Leaving aside the assumption that there was a chariot as opposed to a selection of fittings, we must remember the suggestive evidence of Manching and the long tradition of ritual deposition in the Iron Age (Kurz 1995; Bradley 1998, esp. chap. 4). Whatever may have been the intent – and by whom, Celt or Thracian – we can be certain that, as to the purpose for the deposition, for once that tired old explanation, ritual, must be justified. Not only do all the pieces discussed here have close stylistic links but they are associated with chariots or vessels clearly of considerable significance. These are objects indicating high status whose imagery must have had more than simply decorative significance even if we can only guess what that significance might have been.

As already argued, there is no good reason to regard the Mezek bronzes as having been associated with a complete chariot burial or as a Celtic offering to Thracian nobility. Of the various scenarios that have been proposed, that by Totko Stoyanov (Stoyanov 2010; following Домарадски 1984, 126) seems most persuasive. Adaios, some of whose coinage bears a boar and spear, is assumed to have served as a general to Antigonos II Gonatas, the powerful King of Macedonia. Residing latterly in the area of Mezek, Adaios, having taken part in the decisive defeat of the Celts at Lysimachia in 277 BC, may well have collected the bronzes on the battlefield, then to have them placed as trophies in his last resting place, the great mound of Mal Tepe.

JVSM

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Келти в Тракия? Преглед на гробницата в Мал-тепе, Мезек, с фокус върху латенските украси за колесница

Юлий ЕМИЛОВ / Винсент МЕГАУ

(резюме)

Сред инвентара в куполната гробница под моилата Мал-тепе до с. Мезек, Свиленградско, проучена преди осем десетилетия от Б. Филов, са намерени бронзови апликации за колесница в „пластичен стил“, характерен за Западна и Централна Европа през латенската епоха (**фиг. 1-6**). Тези находки се разглеждат от различни изследователи като емблематични за тракийските галати или археологическо доказателство на „келтската“ експанзия към югоизточния ъгъл на континента. Въпросите за техния произход, датировка, както и обстоятелствата около депонирането им в подмогилното съоръжение продължават да предизвикват дискусии във връзка с взаимоотношенията между „келтите“ и местните общности в древна Тракия през ранноелинистическата епоха. С цел да предложат различни възможности за интерпретация на „келтските“ предмети от Мал-тепе авторите на статията предлагат контекстуален и стилев анализ на частите от колесница, като за първи път се публикуват всички апликации заедно с техните паралели от обширен географски ареал.

В търсене на контекста на бронзовите апликации Юлий Емилов прави преглед на историята на откриването и проучванията в Мал-тепе, както и на наличните данни за местонахождението на отделни групи предмети в гробницата (**фиг. 7**). Отбелязва се значителна разлика между сведенията за находките от кръглата камера и коридора, които са събрани от местните жители, и информацията за гробните инвентари, открити от Б. Филов под